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ABSTRACT

This report describes the design of an implementation evaluation of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy, to be conducted during 1982-83. The Policy and Regulations were enacted in 1978-79 when school districts were required to develop basic skills improvement plans. In 1980-81 districts were required to implement their plans. Although the Policy requires basic skills testing, public reporting, and follow-up assistance to students who do not meet locally determined (minimal) standards, its emphasis is on curriculum and instructional improvements and staff development. The purpose of the "implementation evaluation" is to describe what school districts are and are not doing in response to the Policy, and to explain why districts show whatever (expected) variation is found. An "impact evaluation," consisting of a questionnaire survey (n=100) and an intensive case study (n=8-12) of school districts, is planned for 1985-86 to determine whether Massachusetts students have actually improved in their mastery of basic skills, as intended. Contents include: evaluation design, questionnaire survey, case studies, and pilot test findings. Questionnaires, technical details of development, and interview instruments are appended. (Author/PN)

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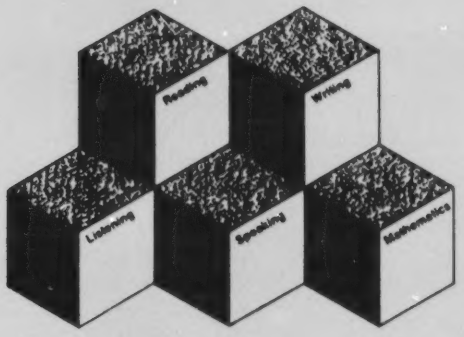
ED221564

Basic Skills Improvement Policy

A DESIGN FOR EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY



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BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY

A Design for Evaluating The Implementation of the Basic Skills Improvement Policy

May, 1982

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Executive Summary

This report describes the design of an implementation evaluation of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy, to be conducted by a contractor during 1982-83. The Policy and Regulations were enacted in 1978-79 when all school districts in the Commonwealth were required to develop basic skills improvement plans. In 1980-81 these school districts were required to begin implementing their plans. Although the Policy requires basic skills testing, public reporting, and follow-up assistance to students who do not meet locally determined (minimal) standards, its emphasis is on curriculum and instructional improvements and staff development. The purpose of the "implementation evaluation" is to describe what school districts are and are not doing in response to the Policy, and to explain why districts show whatever (expected) variation is found. An "impact evaluation" is planned for 1985-86 to determine whether Massachusetts students have actually improved in their mastery of basic skills, as intended.

The implementation evaluation design consists of two interrelated phases. First, a questionnaire survey of a total of 5,000 teachers, school and district administrators and specialists, and local advisory committees, will be conducted in 100, randomly selected (elementary and secondary) schools in approximately 80 districts. From this survey schools/districts will be (anonymously) located on a continuum of highest-to-lowest (or extent of) implementation. Second, 8-12 of these schools and their districts will be chosen for more intensive case study. By selecting half higher-implementation and half lower-implementation schools/districts, factors and conditions which "explain" their varying responses to the Policy can be ascertained.

For the questionnaire survey in October, 1982, 60 elementary (grades K-6) and 40 secondary (grades 7-12) schools will be selected randomly from all public schools in Massachusetts, stratified by kind of community (e.g., big cities, industrial suburbs, residential suburbs, and other communities). In these 100 schools 2,680 teachers and 560 building administrators/specialists will be asked to rate the extent-of-implementation of the Policy and its Requirements in their school. In the districts in which those schools are located, similar questions will be asked of 960 district-wide administrators/specialists and 800 local advisory committee members regarding the extent-of-implementation of the Policy and its Regulations in their school district. The questionnaires have undergone extensive development and pilot testing involving the Department and Board, the Review and Advisory Committees, and approximately 200 school staff and local advisory committee members. They include questions on all aspects of the Policy and Regulations, such as basic skills objectives, minimum standards, testing, reporting, follow-up assistance to students, program management, and local participation.

In addition to describing what districts are doing in response to the Policy, the implementation evaluation will seek to uncover

reasons which explain why districts show whatever variation is found. In the questionnaire survey a comparison and contrast of higher-implementation districts versus lower-implementation districts should reveal factors and conditions which set them apart. For example, higher-implementation districts may be those with high levels of knowledge about and wide-spread advocacy for the Policy. Conversely, lower-implementation districts may exhibit low levels of knowledge about and widespread resistance toward the Policy. Higher-implementation districts may have participated more in Department-sponsored workshops and technical assistance. Lower-implementation districts may have been historically more static and resistant to change even before the Policy. These are but a few examples of reasons which may be found to explain why Massachusetts school districts vary in the extent to which they are implementing the spirit and letter of the Policy. Questions about such "explanatory" factors are included in the questionnaires for all the groups to be surveyed.

For the more intensive case studies, eight to twelve schools (a mix of elementary and secondary schools) and their districts will be selected from among the 100 survey schools/districts primarily on the basis of the questionnaire by applying the following criteria:

1. half selected from the upper third of the "extent-of-implementation" distributions, and half from the lower third (the schools/districts nor anyone but the contractor will know which are which);

2. recency of testing prior to conducting the case studies;;

3. contrasting school/district characteristics, such as:

   . city, industrial suburb, residential suburb, other
   . standards (pass/fail) set
   . % of students who have passed/failed (two years of data)
   . questionnaire impact ratings
   . factors which distinguish higher-from-lower implementation schools/districts

The idea here is to select schools/school districts which represent varying and contrasting implementation patterns, and then to study those selected to try to explain how and why they vary, and with what consequences (actual and anticipated consequences, as will be possible to ascertain next year). Final sample size and selection criteria will be decided after results of the questionnaire survey are available, and suggestions on this matter received from the Review and Advisory Committees, and the Board of Education.

The case studies will include: the examination of accessible documents; interviews with 26 students in each case site who did and did not meet local (minimal) standards, their parents, and their teachers; and various school and district people who were/are prominently involved in shaping their local, basic skills program (e.g., school committee, district administrators, teachers, students,

citizens, etc.).

One unique feature of this design is that major Policy architects and participants--the Massachusetts Board of Education, and statewide Advisory and Review Committees--will review the questionnaire survey results to shape the details of the case studies, before they are conducted, to insure that the evaluation will be useful to them as they reevaluate the Policy.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Development of the Policy

During the mid to late 1970's, widespread dissatisfaction with the levels of mastery of basic skills of American students, and the renewed press for accountability, prompted many states to adopt what are commonly called "minimum competency testing programs." Some states, like Florida, require that students pass a state-mandated test as a requirement for high school graduation. Other states, like New Hampshire, simply encourage school districts to adopt minimum competency standards. The Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy is somewhere between these two extremes--it requires all school districts to develop their own programs using state-specified competencies at the secondary level, but it does not tie high school graduation to demonstrated mastery of those competencies. Massachusetts school districts are required to test students and to publish their results annually, but the emphasis of the Policy is on curriculum, instruction, and staff development, not on (added) testing and remediation.

In January, 1979, the Massachusetts State Board of Education gave final approval to a document entitled Basic Skills Improvement Policy and Regulations. This document, which represented the culmination of three years of discussion and participation around the Commonwealth about what kind of minimum competency program should be adopted by Massachusetts, has been the basic guideline used by public school districts in preparing and implementing plans for improving the teaching and learning of basic skills.

Implementation of the Policy began in the 1979-80 school year when all school districts were required to develop secondary (7-12), basic skills plans in reading, writing, and mathematics. By the fall of 1980, 270 secondary level basic skills plans had been approved by the Department of Education and some 400 elementary assurances received (schools must develop, but are not required to submit their elementary plans). Both elementary and secondary plans were to include the following components:

1. a description of how administrators, teachers, parents, employers, students (at the secondary level only), and the general public participated in the development of the plan;

2. the basic skills objectives and acceptable level of achievement (minimum standards) for reading, writing, and mathematics;

3. the instruments selected to evaluate student achievement of minimum standards;

4. the grade level for evaluating students;

5. a description of how the public will receive information on the plan; and

6. a description of the follow-up instruction programs and services to be provided students not achieving minimum standards.

In December, 1980, a report entitled Summary of Secondary Level Basic Skills Plans for Reading, Writing and Mathematics was submitted to the State Board of Education. This summary described the major characteristics of the 270 secondary level plans received by the Department.

In 1980-81 schools began implementing their basic skills programs in reading, writing, and mathematics at all levels. At the end of that year school districts were required under the Regulations to report to the Department:

> ...the number and percentage of students by race, sex, and linguistic minority who have and have not achieved the minimum standards established by the public school district for the early elementary, later elementary, and secondary levels.

By the fall of 1981, therefore, all school districts reported to the Department the following information on their program results at each grade level for each skill (reading, writing, mathematics):

1. the grade level at which students were evaluated;

2. the evaluation instrument (or instruments) which were administered;

3 a description of the minimum standard used to determine if students achieved basic skills;

4. the number and percent of students evaluated who achieved and who did not achieve minimum standards;

5. the number and percent of female and male students evaluated who achieved and who did not achieve minimum standards;

6. the number and percent of students evaluated, by race/ethnicity reporting categories, who achieved and who did not achieve minimum standards; and

7. the number of students exempted from the program or not evaluated during the school year, including the number of students exempted or not evaluated by sex and race/ethnicity reporting categories.

In December, 1981, the information provided from schools was analyzed, summarized, and reported by the Department of Education in two publications:

1. 1980-81 Statewide Summary of Student Achievement of Minimum Standards in the Basic Skills of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics; and

2. 1980-81 Statewide Achievement of Minimum Standards in the Basic Skills of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics - Report on Individual School Districts.

In 1981-82, school districts began their second year of implementation of their basic skills programs in reading, writing, and mathematics. New forms for reporting on this second year were provided to schools. In addition, schools began to submit their basic skills plans for Listening.

The current chronology of the Regulations calls for the following to occur:

- All local district Listening plans submitted by school districts to the Department by August 1, 1982;

- Secondary annual report forms submitted by school districts to the Department by August 31, 1982; and

- 1981-82 Statement Summary of Student Achievement of Minimum Standards in the Basic Skills of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics submitted to State Board of Education - Winter, 1982/83.

B. Evaluation of the Policy

The initial impetus for an evaluation of the policy, as well as the type of evaluation that should take place, is implied in the Policy itself:

> On the basis of local experience in the implementation of this Policy, however, the Board will review the need for and feasibility of including basic skills competency as one of the requirements for a diploma in the future. It directs the Advisory Committee...to review this matter after implementation of local minimum standards beginning in 1980-81 and to report to the Board on this issue no later than June, 1983.

Consistent with this direction, in late 1979, the Advisory Committee on Basic Skills Improvement began formal consideration of what type of evaluation should be undertaken. The Committee's

deliberations resulted in a general consensus in early 1981 that:

- a formal evaluation of the Policy would be helpful and useful for both the Advisory Committee and the State Board of Education;
- two types of evaluation...implementation and impact...should be conducted of the Policy;
- by 1983 the only type of evaluation that could provide useful, credible, and informative results would be an implementation evaluation; and
- an impact evaluation would best be conducted during the 1985-86 school year.

The State Board of Education, after examining the Department's and Advisory Committee's recommendations, directed, at its regular meeting of March 24, 1981, the Department to:

> ...plan and conduct a formal program evaluation of the Policy, and further, that the Department report on the evaluation to the Board of Education by October, 1986, to determine the extent to which the goal of improving basic skills has been achieved in the Commonwealth.

Although the Board took no action on delaying its review of a graduation requirement in 1983, the fact that they did approve a two-step evaluation plan (e.g., implementation for 1983 and impact for 1986), meant that the focus of activity until June, 1983, would be primarily on the first-step implementation evaluation.

Before proceeding further it is important to distinguish between the two types of evaluation discussed above. Implementation evaluation, as its name suggests, is concerned primarily with determining what is happening in schools as a result of the Policy. How is the Policy being put into practice? Is what is supposed to be happening actually happening? How is it deviating? What resources, time, activity, and commitment are being focused on implementing basic skills programs? Who is being served and to what degree? What are the attitudes, concerns, problems, and opinions of those effecting or affected by the Policy? What explanations are there for what is happening in schools? In short, how well is the Policy functioning in actual practice?

Impact evaluation, on the other hand, is concerned primarily with outcomes and results. To what degree have students improved in their mastery of basic skills? Where and by whom are basic skills not being achieved? Are students graduating without achieving a minimum level of basic skills mastery? In what ways have programs and instruction been enhanced? Negatively impacted? Are students

with difficulties being identified early and being provided with appropriate help? In short, is the Policy achieving its purposes?

It is important to note that while the results of the implementation evaluation will be presented to the Board in 1983, the results of impact evaluation will not be available until 1986. The Board will have information on what schools are doing...the level of effort expended...the perceptions of educators and the public as to what is working and not working by 1983. But it will not be until 1986 that an assessment of high school seniors, all of whom will have been exposed to the Policy, could take place. Only at that time can a more definitive answer be given to whether the Policy is achieving its stated purpose of assisting

> ...all students in achieving mastery of basic skills prior to high school graduation through the provision of appropriate curriculum, instruction, and evaluation.

C. Evaluation Planning

Following the Board of Education's March 24, 1981, authorization for the Department to undertake a program evaluation of the Policy, plans were made, in consultation with the Advisory Committee, for a two-staged implementation evaluation:

Stage I - September, 1981 - June, 1982

This stage would involve the planning, designing, and preparation for carrying out the implementation evaluation. The information to be collected, the instruments to be used to gather this information, the populations to whom the instruments would be administered, the schedule for the evaluation, the analysis to be undertaken of the evaluation findings, and the reporting to be made would be determined during this stage.

Stage II - September, 1982 - June, 1983

This stage would involve conducting and reporting on the evaluation. Instruments would be administered to target populations during the fall, results analyzed during the winter and reported in the spring. Final reports would be submitted to both the Advisory Committee and the Board of Education, and, following this, sent to all school systems.

With the assistance of a contractor, TDR Associates, Inc., of Newton, Massachusetts, Stage I began in the fall of 1981. Three groups were involved at critical junctures in planning the evaluation design.

- a Review committee composed of current and former members of the Advisory Committee on Basic Skills Improvement;

- the Advisory Committee on Basic Skills Improvement; and

- the Department's central and regional basic skills staff.

The suggestions, advice, and reactions of these groups were solicited at critical design phases on:

- the basic model for the evaluation

- the scope of the evaluation

- the questions to be addressed in the evaluation

- the instruments to be used and the specific populations to whom these instruments would be administered

- the final evaluation design and plans

The remainder of this report provides a description of the evaluation design and how it was developed. During the developmental stage certain assumptions became clear which helped to guide and direct the planning efforts.

The most important assumption had to do with the audiences for the evaluation. Quite early the primary audiences for the evaluation were identified as the State Board of Education and the Advisory Committee on Basic Skills Improvement. It became important, therefore, to make sure that the questions addressed in the evaluation were congruent with those uppermost in the minds of members of these two groups.

Related to this assumption was a second assumption that the results of the evaluation should be analyzed and reported in a manner that would promote insightful deliberations, sensitive recommendations and effective decisions by both groups. The evaluation, in short, should be useful. It should be more than a compilation of questionnaire findings; it should provide help in understanding and explaining the findings.

A third assumption focused on the credibility of the evaluation. To be credible the evaluation had to solicit information from all major groups affected by the Policy. Although financial constraints would obviously limit the size of these various groups, it was clear to all those involved in planning the evaluation that without some participation by major groups the evaluation would suffer.

A related assumption that became evident was the need to take into account the likelihood that there would be wide variability in how districts were implementing and experiencing the Policy. This meant not only taking into account differences in district size, characteristics, and location, but also differences in attitudes, resources, and extent of implementation. By taking this variability into account the evaluation could provide useful insights into understanding the findings.

A final set of assumptions that became explicit during the planning of the evaluation concern issues of feasibility. Clearly, the evaluation had to be "doable" during one school year. Realistic expectations on cooperation from schools and others to be involved had to be determined. Reasonable budgetary limits had to be established in order to shape the scope of the evaluation and clarify the level of effort to be expended. In short, the constraints and limitations that would operate during the evaluation had to be understood.

II. EVALUATION DESIGN

A. Purposes and Rationale

Experience and research consistently demonstrate that in any state, school districts' responses to state or federal mandates vary--often widely in the nature and extent of their responses to those mandates. To date such variation is apparent in Massachusetts school districts' responses to the Board's Basic Skills Improvement Policy. Some districts have and continue to set high standards, to improve the curriculum and instruction, and to demonstrate broad-based involvement in their entire venture. At the opposite pole, other districts appear to be complying only with minimum Policy requirements by setting low standards, and by emphasizing testing and remediation over the intended improvement in curriculum, instruction, and staff development. Thus, Massachusetts school districts appear to show typical variation in the nature and extent of their implementation of the Basic Skills Improvement Policy.

The first purpose of the implementation evaluation is to document and describe the nature and extent of such variation. In its monitoring of the Policy the Massachusetts Department of Education has established that most districts in the Commonwealth appear to be in compliance, at least with the minimal requirements of submitting plans, testing students, and reporting test results. Beyond minimal compliance, however, precise and comprehensive (statewide) information as to the extent of implementation of the Policy is lacking. Indeed, some variation may be healthy--demonstrating how different and perhaps innovative means can be used to accomplish the common purpose of the Policy. But other variation may simply indicate foot-dragging, or half-hearted, ineffective action. It is important for the Department (and school districts) to be able to distinguish between what is healthy and thus worthy of sharing among districts, from what requires further monitoring or corrective action. For this, the implementation evaluation is to document and describe what school districts are doing in response to the Policy, to be judged against the full intent and requirements of the Policy.

Documentation and description are necessary and useful, but to enhance the evaluation the design includes explanation--its second purpose. In addition to describing what districts are doing in response to the Policy, the implementation evaluation will seek to uncover reasons which explain why districts show whatever variation is found. A comparison and contrast of higher-implementation districts versus lower-implementation districts should reveal factors and conditions which set them apart. For example, higher-implementation districts may be those with high levels of knowledge about and widespread advocacy for the Policy. Conversely, lower-implementation districts may exhibit low levels of knowledge about and widespread

resistance toward the Policy. Higher-implementation districts may have participated more in Department-sponsored workshops and technical assistance. Lower-implementation districts may have been historically more static and resistant to change even before the Policy. These are but a few examples of reasons which may be found to explain why Massachusetts school districts vary in the extent to which they are implementing the spirit and letter of the Policy.

A third, and perhaps overriding purpose of the implementation evaluation, based in large part on the preceding two purposes, is to suggest areas and ways in which the Policy may be strengthened or changed. More specifically, the evaluation should uncover:

- potential changes that should be considered by the State Board of Education;
- areas in which the Department of Education should focus its efforts; and
- areas which local school districts can review for themselves.

B. Analytic Framework

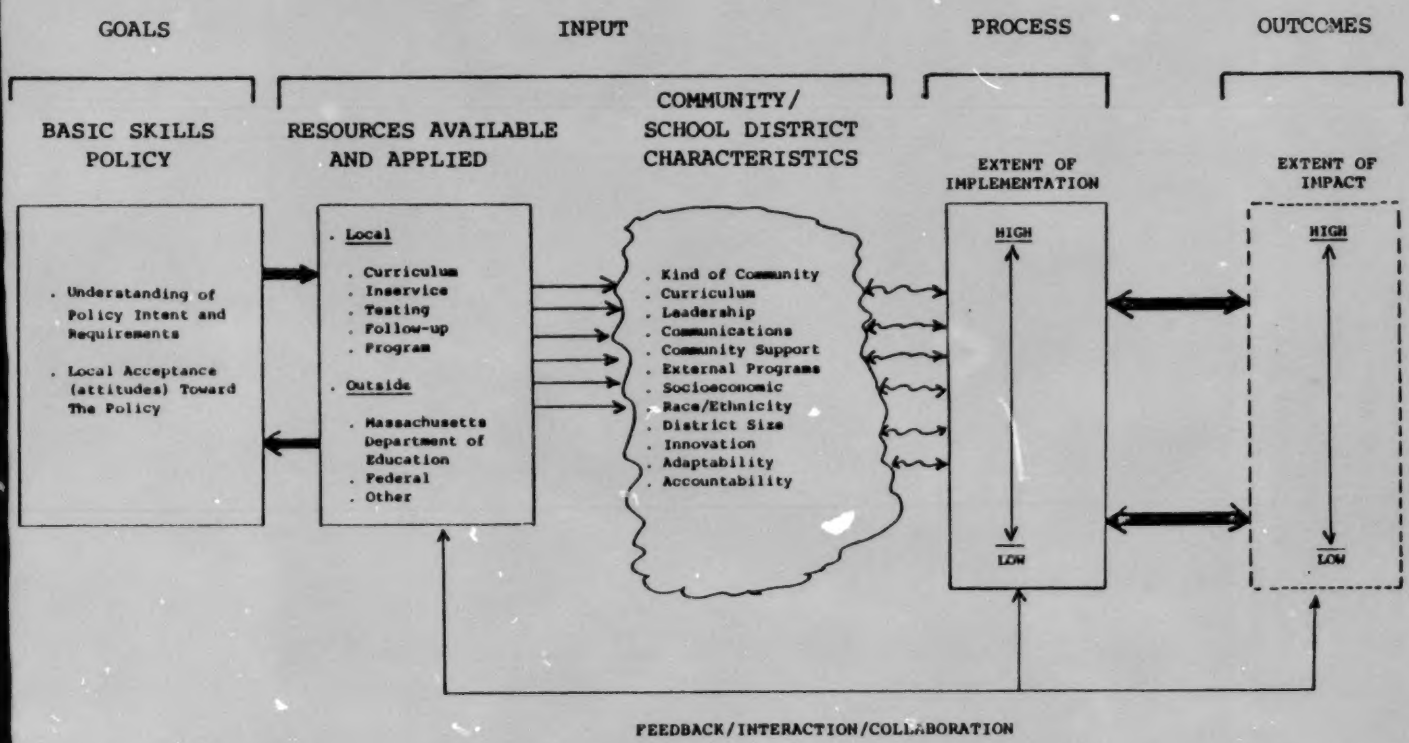
To design an evaluation which would both describe what school districts are doing in response to the policy, and to explain reasons for the variation found in their responses, it is useful to start with some concept of which kinds of factors and conditions might be involved. Such a framework is summarized in the diagram shown in Figure 1 (p. 10).

Starting at the right of Figure 1, the "outcome" or "extent of impact" box represents the desired effect of the Policy--improved basic skills mastery by all Massachusetts public school students. Some questions about perceived (anticipated) outcome/impact will be asked in the implementation evaluation, but a full impact study is planned for 1985-86, to allow sufficient time for demonstrable, improved basic skills mastery levels to materialize state-wide.

The documentation and description of what school districts are doing in response to the Policy is represented by the second-from-right-box--the "process" or "extent of implementation" box. For this purpose, eight key aspects of the Policy have been translated into questionnaire items (see Appendix A, pp. 36-102) which are to be used in a state-wide survey of 100 schools in approximately 80 districts, to be enhanced by case studies of 8-12 of those schools. These eight key aspects of the Policy are:

Figure 1

PROPOSED EXPLANATORY MODEL OF FACTORS AND CONDITIONS THOUGHT TO AFFECT IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY



1. broad-based participation
2. basic skills objectives
3. test (pass/fail) minimum standards
4. testing instruments
5. follow-up programs and services
6. monitoring, evaluating, and modifying programs
7. special needs students
8. local program management

The items on the questionnaires reflect what the Policy requires, recommends, or encourages, in each of these eight areas. They will be used as an index of the "extent of implementation" of the survey sample schools/school districts.

The middle of Figure 1 represents key "inputs" to implementation of the Policy, divided into two categories. These are some factors thought likely to effect (explain) expected variation in the extent of implementation among school districts in the Commonwealth. Under "community/school district characteristics," factors such as kind of community (e.g., city, industrial suburb, residential suburb, other), type of curriculum, and district communication, etc., are to be determined/measured in the evaluation. Similarly, under "resources available and applied," the availability and application of key local and outside resources will also be determined/measured. To complete the picture, the "goals" box on the left of Figure 1 indicates that the evaluation will also measure local participants' levels of understanding and acceptance of the Policy.

In the analysis of the information obtained from the questionnaire survey, the sample schools/school districts will be placed (anonymously) on a continuum from highest-to-lowest implementation. Other elements of the preliminary explanatory model shown in Figure 1 which appear to distinguish higher from lower implementation schools/districts will then be identified through correlation analysis. From the results 8-12 of the questionnaire survey schools which show contrasting patterns of Policy implementation will be selected for more intensive (case) study, to confirm, extend, and explain the survey findings in those case study sites.

III. QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

A. Identifying Subjects and Questions

Given a preliminary budget estimate of $100,000 to conduct the evaluation next year, it became necessary to assign priorities to the seemingly endless array of possible subjects and questions. To do this members of both the Review Committee and the Advisory Committee were asked to assign priorities (rank order) to ten possible groups for the questionnaire survey. These groups are:

1. teachers
2. administrators
3. basic skills coordinators
4. parents
5. local advisory committee
6. school committee
7. students
8. community
9. regional center director
10. program specialists

They then rank ordered nine Policy areas for each group regarding the relative importance of asking those subjects questions about those Policy areas. These areas are:

1. participation
2. basic skills objectives
3. standards
4. instruments
5. follow-up programs and services
6. monitoring, evaluating and modifying programs
7. special students
8. management
9. overall

In addition to "importance to ask," members were urged to consider which question areas each subject group should be most informed about and thus capable of thoughtful response. Average rank orderings of the Review Committee and the Advisory Committee are shown on the forms used for this task in Figures 2 and 3 (pp. 13 and 15 respectively).

In Figure 2, for example, the Review Committee gave teachers the highest priority (1.9 average rank order) and program specialists the lowest priority (6.5 average rank order) for the questionnaire survey. Looking down the teacher column, the Review Committee ranked questions about basic skills objectives (2.4 average rank order) as most important to ask teachers, and questions about project

Figure 2: A Rank Ordering of Possible Subjects and Question Areas For The Questionnaire Survey By the Review Committee

1.9 = highest priority
6.5 = lowest priority

POLICY AREA	POSSIBLE GENERAL QUESTIONS	1.9 TEACHERS	2.4 ADMINISTRATORS	2.4 BASIC SKILLS COORDINATORS	3.4 PARENTS	3.7 LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE	4.6 SCHOOL COMMITTEE	6.0 STUDENTS	6.2 COMMUNITY	6.4 REGIONAL CENTER DIRECTOR	6.5 VOCATIONAL SPECIALISTS
I - PARTICIPATION Section 40.06 Part (1a) Section 40.07 Part (1a) of Regulations	Does actual participation match district plans? Who participates? What are the characteristics of local participation? How frequent is the participation? What has participation accomplished? What benefits/disadvantages are perceived in participation? How can participation be improved?	4.5	4.0	7.6	5.8	4.5	4.6	6.6	9.2	8.6	8.7
II - BASIC SKILLS OBJECTIVES Section 40.03 and 40.04	Have basic skills objectives been established at three levels? Are they articulated? Have they been used to identify testing instruments? programs and services? Have there been problems in setting objective objectives?	2.4	3.6	6.1	7.5	6.0	6.1	8.4	9.2	8.3	8.5
III - STANDARDS Section 40.06 Part 1 (b) Section 40.07 Part 1 (b) of Regulations	How are standards developed? What was the rationale? Who was involved? Did they succeed in correctly identifying students with basic skills needs? Were any students misclassified? Are changes needed in process of setting standards? Is information on standards communicated to teachers? students? parents? others?	5.2	3.8	7.2	7.0	5.2	5.3	7.0	8.3	8.2	8.6
IV - INSTRUMENTS Section 40.06 Part 1 (c) Section 40.07 Part 1 (c) of Regulations	What instruments are being used to identify basic skills needs? Rationale? Who was involved? Are instruments adequate for making student identification? What problems are there in using instruments? Is information on student performance being communicated to teachers? students? parents? What improvements are needed?	4.8	6.1	6.3	7.8	7.0	9.0	6.8	8.6	8.7	8.8
V - FOLLOW-UP PROGRAMS AND SERVICES Section 40.06 Part 1 (d) Section 40.07 Part 1 (e & f) of Regulations	What programs and services are being provided? For whom? Duration and frequency? Is the public informed about these? How? What do these programs and services involve? revised programs? new programs? new materials? teacher reassignments? increased time? How are they articulated? Costs? Problems? Adequacy? What improvements are needed?	2.6	3.9	7.6	4.6	6.5	4.4	6.7	8.5	8.4	8.3

Figure 2 (continued)

POLICY AREA	POSSIBLE GENERAL QUESTIONS	1.9 TEACHERS	2.4 ADMINISTRATORS	2.4 BASIC SKILLS COORDINATORS	3.4 PARENTS	3.7 LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE	4.6 SCHOOL COMMITTEE	6.0 STUDENTS	6.2 COMMUNITY	6.4 REGIONAL CENTER DIRECTOR	6.5 PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
VI - MONITORING, EVALUATING AND MODIFYING PROGRAMS Section 40.06 Part 1 (e) Section 40.07 Part 1 (g)	What plans for monitoring, evaluating, and modifying programs are being implemented? Do they match plans? Have program changes resulted? What types? Are these justified based on district data? What staff development efforts have been provided? Staff involved in these efforts? Is there an evaluation plan in place to assess outcomes of program development efforts? How adequate is the plan?	5.5	3.6	6.6	7.9	6.8	5.7	8.4	9.0	8.5	8.2
VII - SPECIAL STUDENTS Section 40.10 Part 1, 2, 3	How are transfers being handled? Are there problems? How are special needs students being handled? Are procedures appropriate? fair? Are these problems? How are bilingual students being handled? appropriate? fair? Are changes in handling on above students recommended?	6.3	7.2	7.6	5.7	8.1	7.5	7.8	9.0	8.9	8.4
VIII - MANAGEMENT Section 40.02 Part 1 Section 40.05 Part 2, 5, 7 Section 40.06 Part 3 Section 40.07 Part 2 Section 40.08 Part 4 Section 40.09 Part 1, 2	Is the total program being implemented as planned? Changes? Are all students being tested at appropriate grade levels? Tested at secondary level at least once a year? Are opportunities being provided for parents and students to review student achievement record? Are annual reports being accurately completed, filed and made available? How are they being made availabe? How is program being administered? Is paperwork being handled efficiently or is it burdensome? What are the costs and how do they compare with other programs?	8.2	3.6	6.7	6.3	6.0	4.3	8.4	8.0	8.8	9.0
IX - OVERALL	What is the overall perception of the district's program success? What are weakest and strongest components? Is there evidence of progress towards basic skills mastery by all students? What is the prognosis for program's future? What would be recommended to strengthen on-going programs?	6.7	7.2	7.9	4.5	6.1	4.1	7.2	7.7	9.0	8.9

1.3 = highest priority
6.6 = lowest priority

Figure 3: A Rank Ordering of Possible Subjects and Question Areas For the Questionnaire Survey By the Statewide Advisory Committee on Basic Skills Improvement

POLICY AREA	POSSIBLE GENERAL QUESTIONS	1.3 TEACHERS	2.2 ADMINISTRATORS	4.1 BASIC SKILLS COORDINATOR	4.3 LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE	4.5 STUDENTS	4.7 PARENTS	4.9 PROGRAM SPECIALISTS	5.1 SCHOOL COMMITTEE	6.3 COMMUNITY	6.6 REGIONAL CENTER DIRECTOR
I - PARTICIPATION Section 40.06 Part (1a) Section 40.07 Part (1a) of Regulations	Does actual participation match district plans? Who participates? What are the characteristics of local participation? How frequent is the participation? What has participation accomplished? What benefits/disadvantages are perceived in participation? How can participation be improved?	5.7	5.4	7.2	4.0	6.7	5.6	7.9	4.3	7.6	8.7
II - BASIC SKILLS OBJECTIVES Section 40.03 and 40.04	Have basic skills objectives been established at three levels? Are they articulated? Have they been used to identify testing instruments? programs and services? Have there been problems in setting objective objectives?	3.5	3.3	6.4	3.6	5.8	5.0	5.8	4.1	7.9	8.8
III - STANDARDS Section 40.06 Part 1 (b) Section 40.07 Part 1 (b) of Regulations	How are standards developed? What was the rationale? Who was involved? Did they succeed in correctly identifying students with basic skills needs? Were any students misclassified? Are changes needed in process of setting standards? Is information on standards communicated to teachers? students? parents? others?	4.2	4.8	7.1	4.4	11.6	5.6	6.4	7.3	8.1	8.6
IV - INSTRUMENTS Section 40.06 Part 1 (c) Section 40.07 Part 1 (c) of Regulations	What instruments are being used to identify basic skills needs? Rationale? Who was involved? Are instruments adequate for making student identification? What problems are there in using instruments? Is information on student performance being communicated to teachers? students? parents? What improvements are needed?	3.2	5.2	6.9	5.7	4.9	5.8	6.7	6.0	8.4	8.9
V - FOLLOW-UP PROGRAMS AND SERVICES Section 40.06 Part 1 (d) Section 40.07 Part 1 (e & f) of Regulations	What programs and services are being provided? For whom? Duration and frequency? Is the public informed about these? How? What do these programs and services involve? revised programs? new programs? new materials? teacher reassignments? increased time? How are they articulated? Costs? Problems? Adequacy? What improvements are needed?	3.3	3.8	7.8	4.9	3.6	4.4	7.4	5.0	8.5	8.6

Figure 3 (continued)

POLICY AREA	POSSIBLE GENERAL QUESTIONS	1.3 TEACHERS	2.2 ADMINISTRATORS	4.1 BASIC SKILLS COORDINATOR	4.3 LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE	4.5 STUDENTS	4.7 PARENTS	4.9 PROGRAM SPECIALISTS	5.1 SCHOOL COMMITTEE	6.3 COMMUNITY	6.6 REGIONAL CENTER DIRECTOR
VI - MONITORING, EVALUATING AND MODIFYING PROGRAMS Section 40.06 Part 1 (e) Section 40.07 Part 1 (g)	What plans for monitoring, evaluating, and modifying programs are being implemented? Do they match plans? Have program changes resulted? What types? Are these justified based on district data? What staff development efforts have been provided? Staff involved in these efforts? Is there an evaluation plan in place to assess outcomes of program development efforts? How adequate is the plan?	4.5	4.3	7.9	5.3	7.3	6.7	7.5	5.9	8.8	8.7
VII - SPECIAL STUDENTS Section 40.10 Part 1, 2, 3	How are transfers being handled? Are there problems? How are special needs students being handled? Are procedures appropriate? fair? Are these problems? How are bilingual students being handled? appropriate? fair? Are changes in handling on above students recommended?	4.7	6.3	8.6	6.8	6.4	6.9	8.3	7.1	8.6	9.0
VIII - MANAGEMENT Section 40.02 Part 1 Section 40.05 Part 2, 5, 7 Section 40.06 Part 3 Section 40.07 Part 2 Section 40.08 Part 4 Section 40.09 Part 1, 2	Is the total program being implemented as planned? Changes? Are all students being tested at appropriate grade levels? Tested at secondary level at least once a year? Are opportunities being provided for parents and students to review student achievement record? Are annual reports being accurately completed, filed and made available? How are they being made availabe? How is program being administered? Is paperwork being handled efficiently or is it burdensome? What are the costs and how do they compare with other programs?	5.4	2.9	7.4	6.0	6.9	7.2	8.1	3.7	8.6	8.8
IX - OVERALL	What is the overall perception of the district's program success? What are weakest and strongest components? Is there evidence of progress towards basic skills mastery by all students? What is the prognosis for program's future? What would be recommended to strengthen on-going programs?	6.0	4.1	7.7	5.3	5.7	5.6	7.9	3.4	8.5	8.9

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management (8.2 average rank order) as least important to ask teachers. This same type of rank ordering of questionnaire subjects and question areas for those subjects is also given in Figure 3 for the Advisory Committee.

Despite slight differences in the rank order numbers, there is striking similarity in the average rank orderings of these two Committees. After much discussion of these results, the Department decided to develop four parallel questionnaires: one for teachers; one for building (school) administrators and specialists; one for district-wide administrators and specialists; and one for local advisory committees. It was also decided that interviews, to be used in the case studies, were better suited than questionnaires for collecting data from students, parents, and school committee members. Given that local Basic Skills Coordinators would be included among the staff slated for the questionnaire survey, this list of subjects for either the questionnaires or the interviews excludes only two of the ten subject groups considered (e.g., community and regional center directors).

B. Questionnaire Development

The rank ordering of the nine Policy areas for each subject group provided guidance in assigning Policy area questions to each group, as shown by the x's in Figure 4 (p. 18). To further tailor the questions to what each subject group is most likely to know about, questions about objectives, standards, follow-up, management, and resources are identical except for their lead-stem reference to "in this school" (for teachers and building/school administrators/ specialists), versus "in this school district" (for district-wide administrators/specialists and local advisory committees). This ties in with the sampling plan which is to select (randomly) 100 schools across the state which are expected to be located in approximately 80 school districts (given the likelihood that more than one school will be selected from the same district, especially in the larger cities). Other common questions about Policy impact, Policy knowledge and attitudes, and school district characteristics are completely identical across subject groups.

The final versions of these four questionnaires are shown in Appendix A, pages 36-102. They are the result of extensive design work, discussion, and pilot testing. Approximately twice the number of items selected for the final versions were initially developed, either directly from Policy statements or implied by the Policy, and also derived from the proposed explanatory model shown in Figure 1 (p. 10). Draft versions of the questionnaires underwent critical reviews and discussions by:

- Bureau staff;
- the Review Committee;
- the Statewide Advisory Committee on Basic Skills Improvement;
- the Department's Basic Skills Staff of the six Regional Education Centers;

Figure 4: Content Areas of The Four Questionnaires (X = included)

POLICY AREA*	Teachers	Building (School) Administrators/ Specialists	District-Wide Administrators/ Specialsists	Local Advisory Committees
I. Participation				X
II. Objectives	X	X	X	X
III. Standards	X	X	X	X
IV. Instruments	X			
V. Follow-up	X	X		
VI. Monitoring (combined with VIII)				
VII. Special Education (included in other sections)				
VIII. Management		X	X	
IX. Overall (includes:)				
1. Questions Which Describe the Subjects	X	X	X	X
2. Policy Impact	X	X	X	X
3. Policy Knowledge and Attitudes	X	X	X	X
4. Resources to Implement the Policy	X	X	X	
5. School District Characteristics	X	X	X	

*See Figures 2 and 3 for a more complete description

- the Massachusetts Board of Education and the Commission of Education; and

- teachers, administrators, specialists, and members of local advisory committees in the first pilot testing.

From these discussions items were deleted, added, and modified, and several different response formats were tried with varying results.

The first pilot testing was conducted in two volunteer school districts, on-site January 18-26, 1982. In each district the study staff met separately with three groups of 8-10 people as shown below:

1. 8-10 elementary level teachers (grades K-6); and secondary level English and Mathematics teachers (grades 7-12)

2. 8-10 elementary and secondary building administrators and specialists; and central office administrators and specialists; and the designated Basic Skills Coordinator

3. 8-10 local advisory committee members

Each group met with a study staff member once for approximately 1 to 1 1/2 hours in their school districts. During this time they completed a questionnaire, and participated in a follow-up discussion/critique of that questionnaire. Complete confidentiality was assured, and times and places were arranged at the participants' convenience. These groups had many useful comments and suggestions, and the questionnaires were again altered accordingly (no statistical analysis of these results were conducted at this stage, given the small samples sizes).

The more extensive, second pilot testing was conducted in two different (volunteer) school districts, on-site February 1-5, 1982. In each district the study staff asked to meet separately with three groups of people as shown below:

1. 50-100 elementary level teachers (grades K-6); and secondary level English and mathematics teachers (grades 7-12)

2. 20-40 elementary and secondary building administrators and specialists; and central office administrators and specialists; and the designated Basic Skills Coordinator

3. all available local advisory committee members

The actual number of participants fell somewhat short of this goal, as shown in Figure 5, below, for the total sample of useable questionnaires from both districts:

Figure 5: Statistical Pilot Test Sample for the Questionnaires

Questionnaire	District 1 N	District 2 N	Total N
Teachers	22	83	105
Building (School) Administrators/ Specialists	18	3	21
District-Wide Administrators/ Specialists	12	2	14
Local Advisory Committees	14	--	14
TOTAL N	66	88	154

Each group met with a study staff member once for approximately 3/4 to 1 hour in their school district. During this time they completed a questionnaire, and wrote any critical comments on the questionnaire that they chose to make. Again, complete confidentiality was assured, and times and places were arranged at the participants' convenience.

The questionnaires were hand-screened, keypunched and verified, and subjected to several types of statistical (computer) analysis. The results were discussed with the Review Committee, for the purposes of:

1. eliminating one-third of the items, as consistently urged by the pilot test participants;

2. refining items to be included, where warranted; and

3. making final selection of items to form "scales," to be used as overall measures of the extent of implementation of the major Policy areas (e.g., Objectives, Standards, Follow-up, etc., see Figure 7, p. 107).

To accomplish these tasks the questionnaire results were reviewed using primarily the frequency distributions of item

responses and inter-item correlations. The technical details of the statistical analyses conducted, and the uses of the results, are described in Appendix B (p. 103). In summary, the items finally selected showed high validity and reliability characteristics, given the size of the pilot test samples. Results indicate that the final questionnaires shown in Appendix A will demonstrate similarly high validity and reliability characteristics when used next year on the much larger, actual survey samples.

C. 1982-83 Questionnaire Sampling and Administration Plan

For the questionnaire survey next year, which will come before the follow-up case studies, the plan is to randomly select 60 elementary (grades K-6) and 40 secondary (grades 7-12) schools across the Commonwealth. The school is selected here as the sampling unit for several reasons. With every (public) school in Massachusetts having an equal chance to be chosen, a true random sample of schools is derived from which the findings can be generalized to all schools in the state. Given that there are more schools in the larger school districts, proportional district sampling will also result. If school districts were chosen first, there is no compelling rationale for selecting schools within districts (e.g., randomly, as "representative"?). It is widely acknowledged that schools vary within districts, and that any one or two schools cannot be said to "represent" a given district. Finally, schools provide a convenient and cost-efficient site for questionnaire administration, as opposed to selecting a random sample of teachers across the state, for example.

In drawing the sample all public schools in Massachusetts will be designated as either elementary (K-6) or secondary (7-12)--designations used in the Policy. Schools which do not fall exactly into either of these categories (e.g., K-8, 6-8) will be placed into the category where the majority of students are enrolled. Any 5-8 schools will be designated as elementary schools. Separate samples will be chosen for each of the two levels.

Schools will be stratified into four categories according to the kind of community which they represent:

- Big Cities: communities designated as central cities according to the 1980 United States Census. Examples include Boston, Brockton, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Worcester.

- Industrial Suburbs: suburbs of central cities with below-average family income, and with more than 20% commercial and 7% industrial land use. Examples include Cambridge, Chelsea, Medford. Quincy, Peabody, Waltham, Lee, Monson.

- Residential Suburbs: suburbs of central cities other than Boston with above-average family income, and all nonindustrial suburbs of Boston. Examples include Arlington, Braintree, Framingham, Scituate, Walpole, Andover, Dover, Milton, Newton, Chelmsford, Shrewsbury, Wilbraham.

- Other Communities: resort towns in the Cape Cod and Berkshire areas, nonindustrial suburbs of cities other than Boston with below-average family income, towns with below-average family income, and communities with a population of less than 2,500. Examples include Barnstable, Chatham, Yarmouth, Stockbridge, Bridgewater, Hadley, Oxford, Stoughton, Newburyport, Taunton, Ayer, Kingston, Orange, Webster, Ashfield, Dunstable, Plympton.

Separate selection of 60 elementary and 40 secondary schools from these four kinds of communities will be based on the proportion of all schools in each category. The school sample is not large enough to also stratify by the Department's six regions, but adequate, regional distribution of the sample schools is anticipated as an outcome of this procedure by chance alone.

This sampling procedure provides a relatively cost-efficient way of collecting statewide information about implementation of the policy. It allows for generalizations to be made by elementary and secondary schools, school districts, and kinds of community. The exact levels-of-confidence of the sample will be provided when the actual sample is drawn. By oversampling of four elementary and four secondary schools, and by drawing substitute schools randomly, if needed, it is anticipated that the sample target will be reached (few refusals are anticipated). Letters of agreement to participate will be obtained from the sample district Superintendents this year, to prepare for questionnaire administration early next October, 1982.

Within these 100 schools, and the 80 districts in which it is expected they will be located (given the likelihood that some multiple schools will be selected from larger districts, like cities), the estimated sample of subjects is shown by school level in Figure 6.

Figure 6: 1982-83 Estimated Questionnaire Survey Sample

SCHOOL LEVEL	Teachers	Building Administrators/ Specialists	District Administrators/ Specialists	Local Advisory Committee	TOTAL
Elementary	18/school	4/school	12/district	10/district	
X 60 schools in 48 districts	1,080	240	576	480	2,376
Secondary	40/school	8/school	12/district	10/district	
X 40 schools in 32 districts	1,600	320	384	320	2,624
TOTAL ESTIMATED SAMPLE	2,680	560	960	800	5,000

School staff to be included in the questionnaire survey include:

- elementary schools: all professional staff (teachers, administrators, and specialists)
  - plus selected district administrators/ specialists, and local advisory committee
- secondary schools: all English teachers (reading and writing), all mathematics teachers, a sample of other-subject teachers, and 8 building administrators/specialists (principals, department heads, guidance, special needs, and bilingual staff)
  - plus selected district administrators/ specialists, and local advisory committee

The "selected district administrators/specialists," refers to 12 people who are highly involved in and responsible for a given district's Basic Skills Improvement Program, such as the Superintendent of Schools, other central administrative staff such as the

Directors of English and Mathematics, and designated Basic Skills Coordinator, etc. Specific roles are bound to vary from district to district, and thus will be selected in consultation with the people most knowledgeable and responsible in each sample district.

The questionnaires are to be administered in October, 1982 to allow sufficient time for the questionnaire analysis, and selection and completion of the follow-up case studies. All questionnaires are to be administered by the 1982-83 contractor's staff to groups of subjects, on-site, under standardized and uniform conditions (details to be worked out by the contractor and the appointed district coordinators). According to the pilot testing, the complete questionnaire administration will take approximately 35-45 minutes, which includes time for organization and explanation, as well as having the subjects complete the questionnaires. All questionnaires are to be collected by the contractor's staff at the conclusion of these sessions. Participants will be assured of confidentiality--the contractor will provide the necessary security to insure that no individuals, schools or school districts will be identified in this study.

D. Questionnaire Analysis and Reporting

Analysis of the questionnaires will proceed through stages, with the results of each stage used to plan the details of successive stages. These stages are:

1. Screening and Preparation

All questionnaires will be hand-screened by the contractor's staff for completeness (>80% of the items completed in each section), for multiple responses (<10% per section) and for apparent set response. While doing this, any written comments will be recorded on master lists coded by questionnaire (subject) type, community, and selected subject information (e.g., teacher-grade level(s), type of administrator/specialist).

Master copies of the blank questionnaire will be formated for keypunching, and each questionnaire will be assigned an identification number to include codes for school, district, region, kind-of-community, questionnaire type, and individual subject number (for the contractor's use in data processing only). Additional available data to be added will be identified with Bureau staff, which could include, for example, two years of basic skills tests results, district cost-per-pupil data, extent of staff reductions, etc.

The coded questionnaires which pass this screening will be keypunched and (100%) certified. A computer-generated listing of this data will also be inspected by the contractor to cross-check on the prior hand-screening described above, and to identify any obvious keypunch errors. After making the necessary corrections the resulting deck will be used in subsequent analysis.

2. Descriptive Statistics

Frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations will be calculated and reported for the total sample for:

a. all items, separately for each (4) questionnaire type;

b. all common items across two or more (comparable) questionnaire types; and

c. all items by all subject characteristics, separately by subject type.

These analyses (a, b, and c above) will also be conducted separately for each school/school district in the sample, including analyses of variance for a, b, and c above. In reporting the school/school district results, the relevant, total sample data will be presented beside it for easy comparison. The results will be reported only by (anonymous) school/school district code number, and by school/school district type. No school or school district will be identified by name, or by obvious descriptive information. Other interesting types of comparison, such as individual school-to-school-type, and individual district-to-district-type, will be exploited as the results allow. In the reporting, the contractor will develop a descriptive and interpretive narrative to accompany the tables thus generated, including a summary listing of the major findings and interpretations.

3. Extent of Implementation Indices and Profiles

Each school/school district in the sample will be placed on a highest-to-lowest implementation continuum (index), as described on pages 9-11, and as shown in Figure 1 (p. 10) regarding the proposed explanatory model for the study.

The following steps are required to accomplish this task:

a. a new cross-validation of each scale shown in Figure 7, page 107, following the technical procedures described in Appendix B (p. 10);

b. the norming of each scale to the total population;

c. the calculation of separate scale scores for each school/school district, using z scores, and converting to standardized scores with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10;

d. the calculation of a total extent-of-implementation index for each school/school district, based on their combined (average), standardized scale scores; and

e. analyses of the variance of the school/school district scale scores, and their total extent-of-implementation index.

In the reporting of these (as all other) results, it is critical that confidentiality be preserved. To explain the appropriate tables, the contractor will prepare a descriptive and interpretive narrative. Both the tables and the accompanying narrative will report the total, extent-of-implementation index of each school/school district, their separate scale scores, and their extent-of-implementation "profile" (i.e., the patterns of scale score variations). This information will also be used in selecting the case study sites, and in developing follow-up questions for case studies.

4. Explanatory Model

Through various regression analyses, the extent-of implementation profiles of the schools/school districts will be compared, and will be related to factors and conditions which may give tentative "explanation" of their variation. Possible typologies of the extent-of-implementation profiles will be explored through the use of cluster analysis. In addition, stepwise regression will be used to assess possible relationships among the sets of variables shown in Figure 1 (p. 10). Each school/school district will be (anonymously) located in relation to a regression line plotting the intersection of predicted and actual extent-of-implementation, as a preliminary test of the predictive validity of this model. Based on the results, the model will be revised/refined as warranted.

As with the previous analyses, these results will be reported by tables, figures, and narrative. This information will also be used in selecting the case study sites, and in developing follow-up questions for the case studies. Given the limitations inherent in questionnaire surveys, regression analyses, and the drawing of causal inferences, these results will be treated as important but highly suggestive "clues" in

explaining whatever variation is found, to be followed up in the case studies. To underscore a major goal of the evaluation, it is important to identify alterable factors and conditions which distinguish high-implementation from lower-implementation schools/school districts to guide future improvement efforts.

A major assumption here, to be tested in the 1985-86 impact evaluation, is that extent-of-implementation (i.e., activities related to carrying out the Policy) will be correlated with extent-of-impact (i.e., improved basic skills mastery by Massachusetts students). It may turn out that varying patterns-of-implementation, rather than the more linear model relationships suggested here, will be better predictors of impact. This is one reason why cluster analysis is proposed here, and the 1982-83 contractor should test these and other possible "explanations" for the variations found in the actual data.

IV. CASE STUDIES

A. Purpose and Relation to the Questionnaire Survey

To review, the questionnaire survey is designed to:

1. document and describe what the sample schools/school districts are doing/not doing in response to the Policy;

2. locate the sample schools/school districts (anonymously) on a continuum from higher-to-lower Policy implementation; and

3. give a preliminary identification of factors and conditions which appear to distinguish higher-to-lower implementation schools/school districts.

The purposes of the case studies are (1) to enhance the questionnaire survey findings, and (2) to develop a deeper understanding of why schools/school districts show whatever variation is found in the nature and extent of their patterns of Policy implementation. For the purpose of this project, a "case study" is defined as a largely qualitative description and analysis of Basic Skills Improvement Policy implementation in a particular school and its district, from which data are gathered partly by field-based or ethnographic methods, rather than solely through rigidly structured interviews which might simply duplicate the questionnaire survey.

B. Case Study Site Selection and Question Development

Eight to twelve schools (a mix of elementary and secondary schools) and their districts will be selected primarily on the basis of the questionnaire survey results, which will draw on responses from one hundred schools in an estimated eighty districts, by applying the following criteria:

1. half selected from the upper third of the "extent-of-implementation" distributions, and half from the lower third (the schools/districts nor anyone but the contractor will know which are which);

2. recency of testing prior to conducting the case studies;

3. contrasting school/district characteristics, such as:

- city, industrial suburb, residential suburb, other
- standards (pass/fail) set
- % of students who have passed/failed (two years of data)
- questionnaire impact ratings
- factors which distinguish higher-from-lower implementation schools/districts

The idea here is to select schools/school districts which represent varying and contrasting implementation patterns, and then to study those selected to try to explain how and why they vary, and with what consequences (actual and anticipated consequences, as will be possible to ascertain next year). Final sample size and selection criteria will be decided after results of the questionnaire survey are available, and suggestions on this matter received from the Review and Advisory Committees, and the Board of Education.

The selection process will proceed through two stages. First, the questionnaire survey analysis will be completed, and from it an interim report will be presented to the Basic Skills Review Committee. In that report, various Policy implementation patterns will be described along with correlates which appear to explain them. The Review Committee will be asked to identify Policy implementation patterns which it feels are the more interesting and important to study further by case method. Second, the Committee's recommendations will be written up and presented to the Advisory Committee and the Massachusetts Board of Education for their review, critique, and recommendations.

This interim process--between the questionnaire survey and the follow-up case studies--will provide a unique opportunity for both Policy architects and practitioner representatives to continue their involvement in shaping the details of the evaluation as it progresses, for maximum usefulness to them. In this process both the Board and the two Committees will be asked to formulate evaluation questions for the case study staff to investigate, based on their analyses of the Policy implementation patterns which emerge. From these recommendations the contractor and Bureau staff will select 8-12 case study sites which seem to typify the patterns identified, and they will use these questions in the interviews with key respondents, as described below

C. Case Study Methodology

It is anticipated that the 1982-83 contractor will provide at least 10 person days for data collection at each case study school/district. The contractor's case study field staff will participate in the analyses of the questionnaire survey results, and the discussions of those results with the Review and Advisory Committees, and with the Massachusetts Board of Education. They will also participate in case study site selection, and in the development of common, key respondent questions.

The contractor will contact superintendents/building principals in the selected districts/schools for authorization to conduct the case studies. The assistance of the Bureau in securing their cooperation will be essential.

The initial step for each fieldworker will be to familiarize himself/herself with accessible documents in the files of each district and school regarding Basic Skills Improvement implementation (e.g., memoranda, agenda and minutes of meetings, directives, etc.). From these documents, the researcher will gain insights into the decisions and issues that have characterized the district's/ schools' efforts to apply the Policy. He/she will also be able to compile a beginning list of persons centrally and frequently involved in the evolution of district and school implementation efforts to contact in the next stage of the fieldwork. It is anticipated that such a list typically will include the names of parents, school committee members, advisory committee members, and even students as well as administrators and teachers.

Following immersion in the documents, the fieldworkers will follow two parallel and probably overlapping paths. First, the researcher will contact and interview the central persons identified in the document review, following-up on questions which derive (bear explaining) from the questionnaire survey results. This "protocol" will be designed to stimulate free-flowing responses by respondents to the questions, from which fresh perspectives on Basic Skills Improvement Policy implementation hopefully will be obtained, as well as additional names of persons active in the implementation process that did not surface in the document review. From those mentioned and nominated the fieldworker will assemble a final set of at least 10 "key respondents": a limited number of informed individuals all of whom he/she will interview, if possible, to obtain a comprehensive picture of the implementation process in that district/school. The key respondent technique is frequently used in case study research, as a strategy that enables the researcher to obtain a well-rounded perspective in situations in which widespread questionnaire administration is impossible or (as in the present instance) has already been done, and more detailed information is sought.

It should be added that the fieldworkers will try to identify and interview opponents and critics of the district's/school's implementation efforts, as well as planners and implementers. They will also encourage representatives of districts/schools judged as "lower" in Policy implementation to view their selection as a case study site as a chance to tell "their side of the story," albeit anonymously, to the Review and Advisory Committees, the Board, and other readers of the final report.

In a parallel effort, the fieldworker will seek the assistance of school personnel in identifying a minimum of 26 students in each case study school who recently took their school's Basic Skills Improvement tests. Fifteen of these will be youngsters who failed one or more of the tests; the other six will be students who passed all of them (with an equal distribution of reading, writing, and mathematics). If necessary, the student sample will be extended to include at least two minority (Black and Hispanic) students who failed the reading test.

To select this sample sensitively and randomly, the contractor will first meet with an appropriate authority in each case study district. That person will provide lists of all students in the school in question who passed and failed particular tests at the grade levels tested (which will vary), to be seen by the contractor only at that meeting (the contractor will not receive or be allowed to make a copy of those lists). Together they will assign random numbers (from an appropriate table) to all students, separately for each pass/fail and test category (e.g., Reading, Writing, Mathematics). From these lists the requisite samples will be drawn to represent Reading, Writing, and Mathematics testing, plus a few additional backup students to cover for absences or refusals. The school/district official and contractor will then develop a time/place schedule for individual interviews of these students by the fieldworkers.

The student interview instrument to be used by the contractor is shown in Appendix C (p. 108). It was pilot tested with eleven students in two school districts, and refined accordingly. It begins by having the student look over at least one basic skills test that he/she recently took, and it proceeds with questions about that test, follow-up assistance provided for those who failed the test, and general questions about the school's/district's Basic Skills Program. The interview instrument consists of both structured questions for quantitative analysis, and series of probing questions ("probes") to explore areas not initiated by the students. In the pilot testing the student interviews took from 15-30 minutes, depending on how willing particular students were to talk beyond what was directly asked.

The school/district official and contractor will also work out a schedule for individual interviews with at least one of each student's teachers, to be conducted after the student is interviewed. For students who failed one or more test, the teacher of the subject (test) selected for the student interview will be selected. For example, if a student failed the Reading test, that student's English teacher (the one with the most follow-up responsibility) will also be interviewed. For students who passed the test, a balanced distribution across the subjects tested is required. The teacher interview instrument to be used is also shown in Appendix C (p. 108), and it parallels the student interview. It was also pilot tested with eleven of the teachers of the eleven students interviewed (as described above) and refined accordingly.

After each student and his/her teacher(s) is (are) interviewed, the school/district will send a letter to that student's parent(s) or guardian(s). The letter will briefly explain the evaluation, urge them to participate, and state that a particular person (the fieldworker, by name) will call them for a telephone interview. After determining whether or not they agree, the interviewer will conduct the interview with at least one parent/guardian using the instrument also shown in Appendix C (p. 108).

The students and their parents will be interviewed to sample student and family perception and experiences of Basic Skills Improvement Policy implementation in the district. This will provide a consumer-oriented perspective otherwise missing from the design of the total evaluation.

D. Reporting

Data from direct observation in the field sites, very commonly included in case study reports, will probably not be prominent in the final report emanating from this project. It is anticipated that the fieldworkers will rarely have the opportunity to observe Basic Skills Improvement Policy in action: tests being given, advisory committees meeting, students being counseled about results, etc. Whenever such opportunities to observe arise, however, they should be exploited by the field staff.

Each fieldworker will write a fifteen to twenty page report that synthesizes and summarizes the results of his/her various interviews, document reviews, and (occasional) observations. In addition, the director of fieldwork will prepare a cross-case analysis, in which important differences and similarities in results among the case studies, and between the case studies and the survey questionnaire, and highlighted and explained. Both the case studies and the cross-case analysis will directly address the questions and topics previously specified by the Review and Advisory Committees, and Board of Education, as well as additional questions and topics that arise out of the fieldwork.

As in most case study research, the writers choose data for inclusion in their reports, in answer to the Committee's and the Board's questions and the fieldworkers' own experiences, through a process of comparing and contrasting the information gathered from different sources. In assembling data gathered in the field, the writer informally assesses the degree of fit he/she senses among the responses and comments he/she has recorded from a variety of respondents with whom he/she has worked. Further, the connections, logic, and coherence of the various data, with each other, are appraised. Through this process, a "story"--in this instance, of Basic Skills Improvement implementation in a particular district/school--emerges. A set of such narratives, plus the proposed

cross-case summary of them, will provide the Committees and the Board with a detailed, and in some aspects perhaps surprising, view of what has happened and is happening in the name of Basic Skills Improvement Policy implementation in a carefully selected sub-sample of schools in Massachusetts.

V. PILOT TEST FINDINGS

The second (statistical) pilot testing of the questionaires, and the pilot testing of the student, teacher, and parent interview, were conducted in the same two school districts. These two districts volunteered to participate and would likely be among the higher-implementation districts if compared to a larger sample. The breadth and depth of their basic skills improvement efforts were impressive, as borne out in their questionnaire ratings and interviews. These results are also consistent with the independent judgements of several knowledgeable educators who are close to school districts' responses to the Policy across the Commonwealth.

Given the predicted, exemplary nature of these pilot test sites, one would expect the questionnaire and interview results to be skewed toward the high end regarding the clearly normative questions asked. As it turned out, both districts scored in the upper half (mean range = 2.4 to 4.0 on a 1-4 scale) rated against the theoretically "ideal" criteria implied in those normative questions. This overall finding contributes to confidence in the validity and reliability of these instruments and procedures, but it also suggests (as recommended in the preceding section) that their technical properties be reestablished on the larger samples next year. For example, skewness toward the high end of (idealized) items and scales may in part have contributed to the rather high reliabilities of most scales used (e.g., .8 to .9 in all cases).

Yet despite this overall skewness, there was sufficient variation between and within these two school districts in both the questionnaire and the interview results, to give evidence of discriminant validity. In an analysis of variance of the questionnaire results, one district scored significantly higher in its total sample on 5 of 11 comparable scales (see Figure 7, p. 107).

- overall impact;
- objectives;
- standards;
- management;
- follow-up; and
- knowledge about the Policy (not listed in Figure 7 as a scale).

These two districts were not significantly different on opinions about the Policy, instruments, district characteristics, district resources, or outside resources.

Within each district, however, significant differences were found on several of these questionnaires scales for different subject groups. In general, district administrators rate things highest, teachers rate things lowest, and building administrators'

ratings fall somewhere between. This is consistent with prior research from a variety of settings, which shows that higher self-evaluations come from those who feel most visably responsible for that which is being rated. Despite such differences in the magnitude of their ratings, the profiles of these three subject groups run roughly parallel in their pattern of relatively high and and low ratings.

There are, of course, interesting exceptions and anomalies which can serve here as examples of how the questionnaire results can suggest questions for the follow-up case studies. In the lower-rated district, teachers agree with their building administrators on most variables (scales), except for overall impact. Teachers rate the overall impact of their school's Basic Skills Improvement Program significantly higher (mean = 3.1 on the same 1-4 scale). Do teachers in this district assume more ownership and responsibility for the program than their building administrators? Do the building administrators here use more critical standards in judging the impact of their program? In the design of this evaluation questions like these which derive from the questionnaire survey are to frame the opening inquiry in the follow-up case studies, especially as the fieldworkers follow the trails of the "key respondents" (see p. 30-31).

The pilot test results described herein are reported to provide further evidence of the technical adequacy of the instruments and procedures, and to illustrate how the questionnaire survey and case studies can be linked. Given the limited sample, however, further reporting of the pilot test results run the risk of being taken incorrectly as somehow representative of Policy implementation by schools/districts across the Commonwealth. The results give encouraging but nevertheless limited evidence of instrument and procedural validity and reliability, sufficient to proceed with reasonable expectation that the design will serve the goal of the evaluation next year. Technical adequacy must, however be confirmed or reestablished on those larger samples next year, as described on page 104.

APPENDIX A: Four Questionnaires

MASSACHUSETTS BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY

IMPLEMENTATION STUDY, 1982-83

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR

TEACHERS

PURPOSES: This questionnaire is part of a study of the implementation of the Massachusetts Board of Education's Basic Skills Improvement Policy, effective starting in 1980. The study is designed to determine how local school districts are responding to the Policy's intent and requirements, and to identify factors and conditions which work for and against Policy implementation.

USES: Please answer all questions thoughtfully and frankly. Confidentiality is assured--we do not ask that you put your name on this questionnaire. The names of individuals, schools, or school districts will not be used in any reporting of the results. Your school/school district was chosen randomly from all schools/school districts in Massachusetts.

What is learned from this study about factors and conditions which work for and against implementation of the Policy will be considered by the Massachusetts Board of Education and Department of Education in their continual assessment of the Policy. This is your opportunity to express your reactions to the Policy.

Section I: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Which one of the following best describes your primary position this year: (Circle one number)

   1. Full-time classroom teacher
   2. Part-time classroom teacher
   3. Specialist working with many classrooms
   4. Specialist working with individual students
   5. Other (please specify) _____

2. What grade level(s) do you teach this year? (Circle one or more numbers)

   1. I do not teach at all
   2. Ungraded
   3. Kindergarten
   4. 1st grade
   5. 2nd grade
   6. 3rd grade
   7. 4th grade
   8. 5th grade
   9. 6th grade
   10. 7th grade
   11. 8th grade
   12. 9th grade
   13. 10th grade
   14. 11th grade
   15. 12th grade
   16. Grade 13 and up

3. What 1 or 2 subject(s) do you teach the most this year? (Circle up to two numbers)

   1. Elementary Self-Contained Classroom
   2. English
   3. Fine Arts (music, art, etc.)
   4. Foreign Language
   5. Health
   6. Mathematics
   7. Occupational Education (business, industrial arts, home economics)
   8. Physical Education
   9. Reading
   10. Science
   11. Social Studies
   12. Special Education
   13. Speech
   14. Vocational
   15. Other (please specify) _____

4. Regardless of what subject(s) you teach, what portion of your daily instructional time do you spend in any of the following areas?

	None At All	Less Than 1 Hour Per Day	1-2 Hours Per Day	3-4 Hours Per Day	5 or More Hours Per Day
1. I do not teach at all	0				
(If you do teach circle one number for each area)					
2. Teaching reading skills	0	1	2	3	4
3. Teaching writing skills	0	1	2	3	4
4. Teaching mathematics skills	0	1	2	3	4
5. Teaching listening skills	0	1	2	3	4
6. Teaching speaking skills	0	1	2	3	4

5. Do you have any special responsibilities this year for implementing your district's basic skills improvement program, beyond the classroom? (Circle one number for each of the following)

District-Wide Responsibilities	Building (School) Responsibilities	Curriculum Area Responsibilities
1. Yes	1. Yes	1. Yes
2. No	2. No	2. No

6. Overall, which best describes your level of involvement this year in your school's basic skills improvement program? (Circle one number)

1. None at all
2. Very little
3. Moderate
4. High
5. Extremely high

7. Overall, which best describes your level of knowledge about your school's basic skills improvement program? (Circle one number)

1. None at all
2. Very little
3. I know enough to know what I'm required to do
4. Knowledge of many aspects of our school's programs
5. Knowledge of most aspects of our school's programs

8. Overall, which best describes your level of knowledge about the intent and requirements of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy? (Circle one number)

    1. None at all
    2. Very little
    3. Moderate
    4. High
    5. Extremely high

9. Are you aware of any <u>effects</u> (outcomes, consequences) so far in your school of your basic skills improvement program on:

(Circle one response for each item)

	I'm Not Aware of Any Effects	Definitely Negative Effects	Somewhat Negative Effects	No Effects At All	Somewhat Positive Effects	Definitely Positive Effects
1. The quality of basic skills instruction in reading	X	1	2	3	4	5
2. Your students' achievement of basic skills in reading	X	1	2	3	4	5
3. The quality of basic skills instruction in writing	X	1	2	3	4	5
4. You students' achievement of basic skills in writing	X	1	2	3	4	5
5. The quality of basic skills instruction in mathematics	X	1	2	3	4	5
6. Your students' achievement of basic skills in mathematics	X	1	2	3	4	5

10. Are you aware of any <u>effects</u> (outcomes, consequences) so far in your school of your basic skills improvement program on the following groups of students? (Circle one response for each item)

1. Vocational/technical/ occupational students	X	1	2	3	4	5
2. Special needs (Chapter 766) students	X	1	2	3	4	5
3. Gifted and talented students	X	1	2	3	4	5
4. Racial/ethnic minority students	X	1	2	3	4	5
5. College preparatory students	X	1	2	3	4	5
6. Bilingual students	X	1	2	3	4	5
7. General education students	X	1	2	3	4	5

Section II: QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL'S BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

A. BASIC SKILLS OBJECTIVES

Basic skills objectives are statements of what students should know or be able to do as a result of effective instruction, such as:

- identify a statement as fact or opinion; or
- change a fraction to a decimal (1/4 to .25).

The Policy requires that every public school district in Massachusetts establish sets of such objectives in reading, writing, and mathematics. It further requires that appropriate curriculum and instruction be provided so that students are likely to acquire those skills by high school graduation.

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school has done so far concerning its basic skills objectives
(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
1. Made an initial review of your existing curriculum	0	1	2	3	4	X
2. Added basic skills objectives to your existing curriculum	0	1	2	3	4	X
3. Added instructional units to regular classroom curriculum to cover your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
4. Extended existing programs to cover your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
5. Informed teachers of your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
6. Provided staff training to improve instruction in basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
7. Informed students of your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school has done so far concerning its basic skills objectives

(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
8. Indentified the grade levels in which your basic skills objectives are to be taught	0	1	2	3	4	X
9. Conducted a review of how your basic skills may be taught in subjects areas other than English and mathematics	0	1	2	3	4	X
10. Provided teachers with names of students in their classes who have not passed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
11. Informed parents of your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X

B. BASIC SKILLS MINIMUM STANDARDS

In addition to establishing sets of basic skills objectives, the Policy requires that minimum standards for the achievement of those objectives be set. Minimum standards specify the percent of items which students must answer correctly, or the test score needed, in order to pass the basic skills test (i.e., passing scores).

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school has done so far concerning its basic skills standards (passing scores)?

(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
1. Informed teachers of the scores needed to pass your tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
2. Informed the local community of the scores needed to pass your tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
3. Reviewed the results of your basic skills tests with your local advisory committee	0	1	2	3	4	X
4. Conducted curriculum reviews based on student test results	0	1	2	3	4	X
5. Reviewed with teachers the items not answered correctly by their students in your basic skills achievement tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
6. Monitored the progress of students who have failed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X

C. FOLLOW-UP PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Policy requires that local school districts provide "appropriate follow-up instructional programs and services to students who have not achieved minimum standards" (i.e., have not passed your tests). Several types of follow-up which might be provided are described below.

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school has done so far concerning its follow-up programs and services?

(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
1. Provided assistance in regular classrooms to students who failed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
2. Placed students who failed your basic skills tests in remedial classes or programs	0	1	2	3	4	X
3. Referred students who failed your basic skills tests for placement in special needs (Chapter 766) classes or programs	0	1	2	3	4	X
4. Reassigned students who failed your basic skills tests to less difficult courses or programs	0	1	2	3	4	X
5. Consulted or informed the parents of students who failed your basic skills tests about appropriate action	0	1	2	3	4	X
6. Consulted the students who failed your basic skills tests about appropriate action	0	1	2	3	4	X
7. Assigned staff or specialists to tutor students who failed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
8. Reviewed your curriculum in light of your basic skills objecitves	0	1	2	3	4	X
9. Reviewed your curriculum after analyzing and reporting of student test results	0	1	2	3	4	X
10. Made modifications in your curriculum as a result of your basic skills test results	0	1	2	3	4	X

D. INSTRUMENTS

School districts were allowed to choose their own instruments to measure student achievement in the basic skills. To what extent do the basic skills instruments used by your school:

(Circle one response for each item)

		Not At All	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
1.	Measure the achievement of your basic skills objectives in reading	1	2	3	4	X
2.	Measure the achievement of your basic skills objectives in writing	1	2	3	4	X
3.	Measure the achievement of your basic skills objectives in mathematics	1	2	3	4	X
4.	Help to identify curriculum areas in need of modification	1	2	3	4	X
5.	Help to identify grade levels by which basic skills are not being learned	1	2	3	4	X
6.	Test for basic skills actually being taught	1	2	3	4	X
	. To what extent were your district's instruments:					
7.	Reviewed (evaluated) by teachers before chosen	1	2	3	4	X

Section III: QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT

A. SCHOOL DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS

To some extent the implementation of any new effort, such as the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy, is affected by existing characteristics of the school district. In the following questions we ask for your opinion about certain aspects of your district's functioning.

. Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of your district's: (Circle one response for each item)	Definitely Inadequate	Less Than Adequate	Adequate	Outstanding	I Don't Know
1. Administrator-To-Teacher Communications; accurate and timely flow of information about your basic skills program from administrators to teachers within your school district	1	2	3	4	X
2. Teacher-To-Administrator Communications; accurate and timely flow of information about your basic skills program from teachers to administrators within your school district	1	2	3	4	X
3. Innovation; history of trying new programs and new methods	1	2	3	4	X
4. Climate; enthusiasm and support for teaching and learning	1	2	3	4	X
5. Adaptability; capacity to adjust to changes, such as declining enrollments, staff and budget reductions, new mandates, etc.	1	2	3	4	X
6. Accountability; responsibility for improving basic skills achievement is appropriately shared among school staff, students, and parents	1	2	3	4	X

B. RESOURCES

To implement the Policy, local school districts must provide their own resources. In the following questions we ask for your opinions about the adequacy of resources allocated to implementing your district's Basic Skills Improvement Program.

. Overall, how would you rate the resources your district is currently allocating to:

(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Needed or Already Done	Definitely Inadequate		Less Than Adequate	Adequate	Outstanding	I Don't Know
1. Curriculum review and development	0	1	2	3	4		X
2. Materials for teaching basic skills	0	1	2	3	4		X
3. Staff training	0	1	2	3	4		X
4. Testing students	0	1	2	3	4		X
5. Follow-up assistance to students who fail the tests	0	1	2	3	4		X
6. Monitoring, evaluating, and modifying your district's basic skills improvement program	0	1	2	3	4		X
7. Providing staff time for implementing your district's Basic Skills Improvement Program	0	1	2	3	4		X

. To what extent have you participated in any Massachusetts Department of Education sponsored:

(Circle one response for each item)

8. Regional Workshops or "Forums"; for example holistic scoring of writing samples, methods for setting standards, discussions of the Policy, etc.

    1. none; because I was unaware of the opportunity
    2. none; I was aware, but I didn't feel the need to
    3. none; I was aware, but could not, or was not designated to go
    4. one workshop
    5. two or more workshops

9. Assistance of Department of Education Staff; on-site, off-site, or telephone advance/information

    1. none; because I was unaware of the opportunity
    2. none; I was aware, but I didn't feel the need to
    3. none; I was aware, but could not, or was not designated
    4. one consultation
    5. two or more consultations

10. Commonwealth Inservice Institute (CII); Institute funded projects in your district on specific aspects of the Policy and its implementation

    1. none; because I was unaware of the opportunity
    2. none; I was aware, but I didn't feel the need to
    3. none; I was aware, but could not, or was not designated to go
    4. one CII project
    5. two or more CII projects

11. Department Publications; reviewing instructional booklets or manuals provided by the Department on setting objectives, establishing standards, etc.

    1. none; because I was unaware of the opportunity
    2. none; I was aware, but I didn't feel the need to
    3. none; I was aware, but could not, or was not designated
    4. one booklet or manual
    5. two or more booklets or manuals

Section IV: QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MASSACHUSETTS BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY

A. FACTS ABOUT THE POLICY

The following questions are to determine how much information about the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy people have been given or have acquired.

Circle T or F for each item, where possible.
Circle X for "I Don't Know" only if you are totally uninformed about particular items.

MASSACHUSETTS BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY WAS ESTABLISHED TO:

	TRUE	FALSE	I DON'T KNOW
1. Comply with a Federal court order which mandates testing in basic skills	T	F	X
2. Increase instructional time in reading, writing, and mathematics	T	F	X
3. Widen public participation in school improvement	T	F	X
4. Establish new or separate instructional programs beyond school districts' regular curriculum	T	F	X
THE POLICY CURRENTLY REQUIRES THAT:			
5. Massachusetts public school students must attain minimal standards in basic skills in order to receive a high school diploma	T	F	X
6. School districts make public their basic skills test results	T	F	X
7. Secondary level students who fail a basic skills test be tested at least once a year until they pass	T	F	X
8. Local school district use the basic skills competency tests developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education	T	F	X

	TRUE	FALSE	I DON'T KNOW
9. Local school districts use a state-specified list of basic skills objectives in secondary reading, writing, and mathematics	T	F	X
10. Special needs (Chapter 766) students may be exempted from basic skills testing	T	F	X
11. Students currently enrolled in approved, transitional, bilingual education programs may be exempted from basic skills testing	T	F	X
12. Local district standards may not be set lower than 65% correct items to pass the tests	T	F	X
13. School districts report the number and percent of students achieving and not achieving minimum standards by race/ethnicity	T	F	X

B. OPINIONS ABOUT THE POLICY

In this section we ask for your opinion about several aspects of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy. Don't worry if you aren't completely certain about "the facts"--we are asking for your opinion or best estimate of the facts.

. Circle the one number which best represents your opinion for each item. Circle X for "No Opinion" only if you are totally uniformed about particular items.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
. IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT, THE POLICY AND ITS REGULATIONS:					
1. Are meeting an important need	1	2	3	4	X
2. Are increasing the emphasis given to basic skills	1	2	3	4	X
3. Are reducing the emphasis given to some other curriculum areas (i.e., music, art, science, etc.)	1	2	3	4	X
4. Are being ignored for the most part	1	2	3	4	X
5. Have had little effect on teachers	1	2	3	4	X
6. Have overemphasized the secondary levels (grade 7-12)	1	2	3	4	X
. THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHOULD REQUIRE:					
7. All school districts to use the same elementary basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
8. All school districts to use the same secondary basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
9. All school districts to use the same standards (score needed to pass the tests)	1	2	3	4	X
10. All school districts to give their basic skills tests at the same grade levels	1	2	3	4	X

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
11. The passing of basic skills tests to be a requirement for high school graduation	1	2	3	4	X
12. The passing of basic skills tests to be a requirement for elementary/ middle school promotion	1	2	3	4	X
. IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT					
13. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in reading at the elementary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
14. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in writing at the elementary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
15. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in mathematics at the elementary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
16. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in reading at the secondary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
17. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in writing at the secondary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
18. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in mathematics at the secondary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
19. Not much is being done to assist students not meeting standards (not passing the tests) in reading	1	2	3	4	X
20. Not much is being done to assist students not meeting standards (not passing the tests) in writing	1	2	3	4	X
21. Not much is being done to assist students not meeting standards (not passing the tests) in mathematics	1	2	3	4	X
22. Teachers are not informed of which students fail the tests until it is too late to develop adequate follow-up services	1	2	3	4	X

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
23. People have made a big issue out of our basic skills test results, by comparing them to the test results of other school districts	1	2	3	4	X
24. The public reporting of test results has had beneficial effects	1	2	3	4	X
25. More time is being spent on basic skills as a result of the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
26. Less time is being spent on art, music, science, history, etc., as a result of the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
27. Student achievement in basic skills will probably improve as a result of the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
. THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHOULD:					
28. Continue the Policy as it is for a few more years	1	2	3	4	X
29. Set state-wide basic skills objectives for all elementary schools	1	2	3	4	X
30. Eliminate the requirements for reporting the number and percent of students achieving and not achieving minimum standards by race/ethnicity	1	2	3	4	X
31. Require that more bilingual students take the basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
32. Require that more special education students take basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
33. Eliminate the Policy immediately as school districts are capable of raising basic skills achievement levels themselves	1	2	3	4	X
34. Drop listening as part of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy	1	2	3	4	X
35. Drop speaking as part of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy	1	2	3	4	X

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
36. Add other basic skills to the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
37. Change the Policy's secondary level objectives in reading, writing, and/or mathematics, as they are too easy or simple	1	2	3	4	X
38. Specify that special education (Chapter 766) students who do not pass a basic skills test once should not have to be tested again.	1	2	3	4	X

WRITTEN COMMENTS: Please feel free to write comments on any aspect of the Policy, or on this questionnaire, on the back of this page.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

MASSACHUSETTS BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY

IMPLEMENTATION STUDY, 1982-83

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR

BUILDING (SCHOOL) ADMINISTRATORS/SPECIALISTS

PURPOSES: This questionnaire is part of a study of the implementation of the Massachusetts Board of Education's Basic Skills Improvement Policy, effective starting in 1980. The study is designed to determine how local school districts are responding to the Policy's intent and requirements, and to identify factors and conditions which work for and against Policy implementation.

USES: Please answer all questions thoughtfully and frankly. Confidentiality is assured--we do not ask that you put your name on this questionnaire. The names of individuals, schools, or school districts will not be used in any reporting of the results. Your school/school district was chosen randomly from all schools/school districts in Massachusetts.

What is learned from this study about factors and conditions which work for and against implementation of the Policy, will be considered by the Massachusetts Board of Education and Department of Education in their continual assessment of the Policy. This is your opportunity to express your reactions to the Policy.

Section I: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Which one of the following best describes your primary position (title) this year? (Circle one number)*

   1. Superintendent (regional vocational school)
   2. Building Principal, Headmaster
   3. Assistant Principal/Administrative Assistant/Housemaster
   4. Department Head/Director/Coordinator (building level)
   5. Non-Administrative Staff Specialist; for example, speech, hearing, learning disability, reading, or guidance
   6. Other (please specify) _____

2. Do you have any special responsibilities this year for implementing your district's basic skills improvement program, beyond the classroom? (Circle one number for each of the following)

District-Wide Responsibilities	Building (School) Responsibilities	Curriculum Area Responsibilities
1. Yes	1. Yes	1. Yes
2. No	2. No	2. No

3. Overall, which best describes your level of involvement this year in your school's basic skills improvement program? (Circle one number)

   1. None at all
   2. Very little
   3. Moderate
   4. High
   5. Extremely high

4. Overall, which best describes your level of knowledge about your school's basic skills improvement program? (Circle one number)

   1. None at all
   2. Very little
   3. I know enough to know what I'm required to do
   4. Knowledge of many aspects of our school's programs
   5. Knowledge of most aspects of our school's programs

5. Overall, which best describes your level of knowledge about the intent and requirements of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy? (Circle one number)

   1. None at all
   2. Very little
   3. Moderate
   4. High
   5. Extremely high

*If you are the only person in your position, you will not be identified in this survey as we will aggregate the results across many school districts (not identified).

6. Are you aware of any <u>effects</u> (outcomes, consequences) so far in your school of your basic skills improvement program on:

(Circle one response for each item)

	I'm Not Aware of Any Effects	Definitely Negative Effects	Somewhat Negative Effects	No Effects At All	Somewhat Positive Effects	Definitely Positive Effects
1. The quality of basic skills instruction in reading	X	1	2	3	4	5
2. Your students' achievement of basic skills in reading	X	1	2	3	4	5
3. The quality of basic skills instruction in writing	X	1	2	3	4	5
4. You students' achievement of basic skills in writing	X	1	2	3	4	5
5. The quality of basic skills instruction in mathematics	X	1	2	3	4	5
6. Your students' achievement of basic skills in mathematics	X	1	2	3	4	5

7. Are you aware of any <u>effects</u> (outcomes, consequences) so far in your school of your basic skills improvement program on the following groups of students? (Circle one response for each item)

1. Vocational/technical/ occupational students	X	1	2	3	4	5
2. Special needs (Chapter 766) students	X	1	2	3	4	5
3. Gifted and talented students	X	1	2	3	4	5
4. Racial/ethnic minority students	X	1	2	3	4	5
5. College preparatory students	X	1	2	3	4	5
6. Bilingual students	X	1	2	3	4	5
7. General education students	X	1	2	3	4	5

Section II: QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL'S BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

A. BASIC SKILLS OBJECTIVES

Basic skills objectives are statements of what students should know or be able to do as a result of effective instruction, such as:

- . identify a statement as fact or opinion; or
- . change a fraction to a decimal (1/4 to .25).

The Policy requires that every public school district in Massachusetts establish sets of such objectives in reading, writing, and mathematics. It further requires that appropriate curriculum and instruction be provided so that students are likely to acquire those skills by high school graduation.

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school has done so far concerning its basic skills objectives

(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
1. Made an initial review of your existing curriculum	0	1	2	3	4	X
2. Added basic skills objectives to your existing curriculum	0	1	2	3	4	X
3. Added instructional units to regular classroom curriculum to cover your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
4. Extended existing programs to cover your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
5. Informed teachers of your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
6. Provided staff training to improve instruction in basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
7. Informed students of your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school has done so far concerning its basic skills objectives

(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
8. Indentified the grade levels in which your basic skills objectives are to be taught	0	1	2	3	4	X
9. Conducted a review of how your basic skills may be taught in subjects areas other than English and mathematics	0	1	2	3	4	X
10. Provided teachers with names of students in their classes who have not passed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
11. Informed parents of your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X

B. BASIC SKILLS STANDARDS

In addition to establishing sets of basic skills objectives, the Policy requires that minimum standards for the achievement of those objectives be set. Minimum standards specify the percent of items which students must answer correctly, or the test score needed, in order to pass the basic skills test (i.e., passing scores).

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school has done so far concerning its basic skills standards (passing scores)?
(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
1. Informed teachers of the scores needed to pass your tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
2. Informed the local community of the scores needed to pass your tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
3. Reviewed the results of your basic skills tests with your local advisory committee	0	1	2	3	4	X
4. Conducted curriculum reviews based on student test results	0	1	2	3	4	X
5. Reviewed with teachers the items not answered correctly by their students in your basic skills achievement tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
6. Monitored the progress of students who have failed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X

C. MANAGEMENT

The Policy requires that every school district submit written plans to the Massachusetts Department of Education for approval, regarding the details of their local, basic skills improvement program. In this section we ask you to rate the extent and effectiveness to which your approved plans have been implemented, as designed.

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school has done so far concerning the management of its basic skills improvement program?

(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
1. Implemented your plans for grades K-3	0	1	2	3	4	X
2. Implemented your plans for grades 4-6	0	1	2	3	4	X
3. Implemented your plans for grades 7-12	0	1	2	3	4	X
4. Established procedures for retesting secondary students who failed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
5. Provided opportunities for parents to examine their child's corrected basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
6. Provided opportunities for students to see their corrected basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
7. Reported to the public the number and percent of students who have and have not passed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
8. Reviewed your regular curriculum to determine at which grade levels your basic skills should be taught	0	1	2	3	4	X
9. Conducted training or assistance for appropriate teachers assigned to students who failed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
10. Established procedures to determine how well your basic skills improvement program is working	0	1	2	3	4	X

D. FOLLOW-UP PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Policy requires that local school districts provide "appropriate follow-up instructional programs and services to students who have not achieved minimum standards" (i.e., have not passed your tests). Several types of follow-up which might be provided are described below.

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school has done so far concerning its follow-up programs and services?

(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
1. Provided assistance in regular classrooms to students who failed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
2. Placed students who failed your basic skills tests in remedial classes or programs	0	1	2	3	4	X
3. Referred students who failed your basic skills tests for placement in special needs (Chapter 766) classes or programs	0	1	2	3	4	X
4. Reassigned students who failed your basic skills tests to less difficult courses or programs	0	1	2	3	4	X
5. Consulted or informed the parents of students who failed your basic skills tests about appropriate action	0	1	2	3	4	X
6. Consulted the students who failed your basic skills tests about appropriate action	0	1	2	3	4	X
7. Assigned staff or specialists to tutor students who failed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
8. Reviewed your curriculum in light of your basic skills objecitves	0	1	2	3	4	X
9. Reviewed your curriculum after analyzing and reporting of student test results	0	1	2	3	4	X
10. Made modifications in your curriculum as a result of your basic skills test results	0	1	2	3	4	X

Section III: QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT

A. SCHOOL DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS

To some extent the implementation of any new effort, such as the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy, is affected by existing characteristics of the school district. In the following questions we ask for your opinion about certain aspects of your district's functioning.

. Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of your district's: (Circle one response for each item)	Definitely Inadequate	Less Than Adequate	Adequate	Outstanding	I Don't Know
1. Administrator-To-Teacher Communications; accurate and timely flow of information about your basic skills program from administrators to teachers within your school district	1	2	3	4	X
2. Teacher-To-Administrator Communications; accurate and timely flow of information about your basic skills program from teachers to administrators within your school district	1	2	3	4	X
3. Innovation; history of trying new programs and new methods	1	2	3	4	X
4. Climate; enthusiasm and support for teaching and learning	1	2	3	4	X
5. Adaptability; capacity to adjust to changes, such as declining enrollments, staff and budget reductions, new mandates, etc.	1	2	3	4	X
6. Accountability; responsibility for improving basic skills achievement is appropriately shared among school staff, students, and parents	1	2	3	4	X

B. RESOURCES

To implement the Policy, local school districts must provide their own resources. In the following questions we ask for your opinions about the adequacy of resources allocated to implementing your district's Basic Skills Improvement Program.

. Overall, how would you rate the resources your district is currently allocating to:

(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Needed or Already Done	Definitely Inadequate	Less Than Adequate	Adequate	Outstanding	I Don't Know
1. Curriculum review and development	0	1	2	3	4	X
2. Materials for teaching basic skills	0	1	2	3	4	X
3. Staff training	0	1	2	3	4	X
4. Testing students	0	1	2	3	4	X
5. Follow-up assistance to students who fail the tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
6. Monitoring, evaluating, and modifying your district's basic skills improvement program	0	1	2	3	4	X
7. Providing staff time for implementing your district's Basic Skills Improvement Program	0	1	2	3	4	X

. To what extent have you participated in any Massachusetts Department of Education sponsored:

(Circle one response for each item)

8. Regional Workshops or "Forums"; for example holistic scoring of writing samples, methods for setting standards, discussions of the Policy, etc

    1. none; because I was unaware of the opportunity
    2. none; I was aware, but I didn't feel the need to
    3. none; I was aware, but could not, or was not designated to go
    4. one workshop
    5. two or more workshops

9. Assistance of Department of Education Staff; on-site, off-site, or telephone advance/information

    1. none; because I was unaware of the opportunity
    2. none; I was aware, but I didn't feel the need to
    3. none; I was aware, but could not, or was not designated
    4. one consultation
    5. two or more consultations

10. Commonwealth Inservice Institute (CII); Institute funded projects in your district on specific aspects of the Policy and its implementation

    1. none; because I was unaware of the opportunity
    2. none; I was aware, but I didn't feel the need to
    3. none; I was aware, but could not, or was not designated to go
    4. one CII project
    5. two or more CII projects

11. Department Publications; reviewing instructional booklets or manuals provided by the Department on setting objectives, establishing standards, etc.

    1. none; because I was unaware of the opportunity
    2. none; I was aware, but I didn't feel the need to
    3. none; I was aware, but could not, or was not designated
    4. one booklet or manual
    5. two or more booklets or manuals

Section IV: QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MASSACHUSETTS BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY

A. FACTS ABOUT THE POLICY

The following questions are to determine how much information about the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy people have been given or have acquired.

Circle T or F for each item, where possible.
Circle X for "I Don't Know" only if you are totally uninformed about particular items.

MASSACHUSETTS BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY WAS ESTABLISHED TO:

	TRUE	FALSE	I DON'T KNOW
1. Comply with a Federal court order which mandates testing in basic skills	T	F	X
2. Increase instructional time in reading, writing, and mathematics	T	F	X
3. Widen public participation in school improvement	T	F	X
4. Establish new or separate instructional programs beyond school districts' regular curriculum	T	F	X
THE POLICY CURRENTLY REQUIRES THAT:			
5. Massachusetts public school students must attain minimal standards in basic skills in order to receive a high school diploma	T	F	X
6. School districts mak public their basic skills test results	T	F	X
7. Secondary level students who fail a basic skills test be tested at least once a year until they pass	T	F	X
8. Local school district use the basic skills competency tests developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education	T	F	X

	TRUE	FALSE	I DON'T KNOW
9. Local school districts use a state-specified list of basic skills objectives in secondary reading, writing, and mathematics	T	F	X
10. Special needs (Chapter 766) students may be exempted from basic skills testing	T	F	X
11. Students currently enrolled in approved, transitional, bilingual education programs may be exempted from basic skills testing	T	F	X
12. Local district standards may not be set lower than 65% correct items to pass the tests	T	F	X
13. School districts report the number and percent of students achieving and not achieving minimum standards by race/ethnicity	T	F	X

B. OPINIONS ABOUT THE POLICY

In this section we ask for your opinion about several aspects of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy. Don't worry if you aren't completely certain about "the facts"--we are asking for your opinion or best estimate of the facts.

. Circle the one number which best represents your opinion for each item. Circle X for "No Opinion" only if you are totally uniformed about particular items.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
. IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT, THE POLICY AND ITS REGULATIONS:					
1. Are meeting an important need	1	2	3	4	X
2. Are increasing the emphasis given to basic skills	1	2	3	4	X
3. Are reducing the emphasis given to some other curriculum areas (i.e., music, art, science, etc.)	1	2	3	4	X
4. Are being ignored for the most part	1	2	3	4	X
5. Have had little effect on teachers	1	2	3	4	X
6. Have overemphasized the secondary levels (grade 7-12)	1	2	3	4	X
. THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHOULD REQUIRE:					
7. All school districts to use the same elementary basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
8. All school districts to use the same secondary basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
9. All school districts to use the same standards (score needed to pass the tests)	1	2	3	4	X
10. All school districts to give their basic skills tests at the same grade levels	1	2	3	4	X

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
11. The passing of basic skills tests to be a requirement for high school graduation	1	2	3	4	X
12. The passing of basic skills tests to be a requirement for elementary/ middle school promotion	1	2	3	4	X
. IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT					
13. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in reading at the elementary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
14. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in writing at the elementary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
15. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in mathematics at the elementary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
16. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in reading at the secondary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
17. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in writing at the secondary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
18. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in mathematics at the secondary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
19. Not much is being done to assist students not meeting standards (not passing the tests) in reading	1	2	3	4	X
20. Not much is being done to assist students not meeting standards (not passing the tests) in writing	1	2	3	4	X
21. Not much is being done to assist students not meeting standards (not passing the tests) in mathematics	1	2	3	4	X
22. Teachers are not informed of which students fail the tests until it is too late to develop adequate follow-up services	1	2	3	4	X

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
23. People have made a big issue out of our basic skills test results, by comparing them to the test results of other school districts	1	2	3	4	X
24. The public reporting of test results has had beneficial effects	1	2	3	4	X
25. More time is being spent on basic skills as a result of the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
26. Less time is being spent on art, music, science, history, etc., as a result of the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
27. Student achievement in basic skills will probably improve as a result of the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
. THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHOULD:					
28. Continue the Policy as it is for a few more years	1	2	3	4	X
29. Set state-wide basic skills objectives for all elementary schools	1	2	3	4	X
30. Eliminate the requirements for reporting the number and percent of students achieving and not achieving minimum standards by race/ethnicity	1	2	3	4	X
31. Require that more bilingual students take the basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
32. Require that more special education students take basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
33. Eliminate the Policy immediately as school districts are capable of raising basic skills achievement levels themselves	1	2	3	4	X
34. Drop listening as part of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy	1	2	3	4	X
35. Drop speaking as part of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy	1	2	3	4	X

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
36. Add other basic skills to the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
37. Change the Policy's secondary level objectives in reading, writing, and/or mathematics, as they are too easy or simple	1	2	3	4	X
38. Specify that special education (Chapter 766) students who do not pass a basic skills test once should not have to be tested again.	1	2	3	4	X

WRITTEN COMMENTS: Please feel free to write comments on any aspect of the Policy, or on this questionnaire, on the back of this page.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

MASSACHUSETTS BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY

IMPLEMENTATION STUDY, 1982-83

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR

DISTRICT-WIDE ADMINISTRATORS/SPECIALISTS

PURPOSES: This questionnaire is part of a study of the implementation of the Massachusetts Board of Education's Basic Skills Improvement Policy, effective starting in 1980. The study is designed to determine how local school districts are responding to the Policy's intent and requirements, and to identify factors and conditions which work for and against Policy implementation.

USES: Please answer all questions thoughtfully and frankly. Confidentiality is assured--we do not ask that you put your name on this questionnaire. The names of individuals, schools, or school districts will not be used in any reporting of the results. Your school/school district was chosen randomly from all schools/school districts in Massachusetts.

What is learned from this study about factors and conditions which work for and against implementation of the Policy, will be considered by the Massachusetts Board of Education and Department of Education in their continual assessment of the Policy. This is your opportunity to express your reactions to the Policy.

Section I: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Which one of the following best describes your primary position (title) this year: (Circle one number)*

   1. Superintendent of Schools
   2. Superintendent (regional vocational school)
   3. Assistant, Associate, or District Superintendent
   4. System-Wide Supervisor, Director or Coordinator
   5. Building Principal, Headmaster
   6. Assistant Principal/Administrative Assistant/Housemaster
   7. Department Head/Director/Coordinator (building level)
   8. Non-Administrative Staff Specialist; for example speech, hearing, learning disability, reading, guidance
   9. Other (please specify) _____

2. Do you have any special responsibilities this year for implementing your district's basic skills improvement program, beyond the classroom? (Circle one number for each of the following)

District-Wide Responsibilities	Building (School) Responsibilities	Curriculum Area Responsibilities
1. Yes	1. Yes	1. Yes
2. No	2. No	2. No

3. Overall, which best describes your level of involvement this year in your school district's basic skills improvement program? (Circle one number)

   1. None at all
   2. Very little
   3. Moderate
   4. High
   5. Extremely high

4. Overall, which best describes your level of knowledge about your school district's basic skills improvement program? (Circle one number)

   1. None at all
   2. Very little
   3. I know enough to know what I'm required to do
   4. Knowledge of many aspects of our school district's programs
   5. Knowledge of most aspects of our school district's programs

5. Overall, which best describes your level of knowledge about the intent and requirements of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy? (Circle one number)

   1. None at all
   2. Very little
   3. Moderate
   4. High
   5. Extremely high

*If you are the only person in your position, you will not be identified in this survey as we will aggregate the results across many school districts (not identified).

6. Are you aware of any <u>effects</u> (outcomes, consequences) so far in your school district of your basic skills improvement program on:

(Circle one response for each item)

	I'm Not Aware of Any Effects	Definitely Negative Effects	Somewhat Negative Effects	No Effects At All	Somewhat Positive Effects	Definitely Positive Effects
1. The quality of basic skills instruction in reading	X	1	2	3	4	5
2. Your students' achievement of basic skills in reading	X	1	2	3	4	5
3. The quality of basic skills instruction in writing	X	1	2	3	4	5
4. You students' achievement of basic skills in writing	X	1	2	3	4	5
5. The quality of basic skills instruction in mathematics	X	1	2	3	4	5
6. Your students' achievement of basic skills in mathematics	X	1	2	3	4	5

7. Are you aware of any <u>effects</u> (outcomes, consequences) so far in your school district of your basic skills improvement program on the following groups of students? (Circle one response for each item)

1. Vocational/technical/ occupational students	X	1	2	3	4	5
2. Special needs (Chapter 766) students	X	1	2	3	4	5
3. Gifted and talented students	X	1	2	3	4	5
4. Racial/ethnic minority students	X	1	2	3	4	5
5. College preparatory students	X	1	2	3	4	5
6. Bilingual students	X	1	2	3	4	5
7. General education students	X	1	2	3	4	5

Section II: QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL'S BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

A. BASIC SKILLS OBJECTIVES

Basic skills objectives are statements of what students should know or be able to do as a result of effective instruction, such as:

- identify a statement as fact or opinion; or
- change a fraction to a decimal (1/4 to .25).

The Policy requires that every public school district in Massachusetts establish sets of such objectives in reading, writing, and mathematics. It further requires that appropriate curriculum and instruction be provided so that students are likely to acquire those skills by high school graduation.

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school district has done so far concerning its basic skills objectives
(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
1. Made an initial review of your existing curriculum	0	1	2	3	4	X
2. Added basic skills objectives to your existing curriculum	0	1	2	3	4	X
3. Added instructional units to regular classroom curriculum to cover your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
4. Extended existing programs to cover your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
5. Informed teachers of your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
6. Provided staff training to improve instruction in basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
7. Informed students of your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school district has done so far concerning its basic skills objectives

(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
8. Indentified the grade levels in which your basic skills objectives are to be taught	0	1	2	3	4	X
9. Conducted a review of how your basic skills may be taught in subjects areas other than English and mathematics	0	1	2	3	4	X
10. Provided teachers with names of students in their classes who have not passed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
11. Informed parents of your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X

B. BASIC SKILLS STANDARDS

In addition to establishing sets of basic skills objectives, the Policy requires that minimum standards for the achievement of those objectives be set. Minimum standards specify the percent of items which students must answer correctly, or the test score needed, in order to pass the basic skills test (i.e., passing scores).

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school district has done so far concerning its basic skills standards (passing scores)?
(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
1. Informed teachers of the scores needed to pass your tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
2. Informed the local community of the scores needed to pass your tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
3. Reviewed the results of your basic skills tests with your local advisory committee	0	1	2	3	4	X
4. Conducted curriculum reviews based on student test results	0	1	2	3	4	X
5. Reviewed with teachers the items not answered correctly by their students in your basic skills achievement tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
6. Monitored the progress of students who have failed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X

C. MANAGEMENT

The Policy requires that every school district submit written plans to the Massachusetts Department of Education for approval, regarding the details of their local, basic skills improvement program. In this section we ask you to rate the extent and effectiveness to which your approved plans have been implemented, as designed.

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school district has done so far concerning the management of its basic skills improvement program? (Circle one response for each item)	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
1. Implemented your plans for grades K-3	0	1	2	3	4	X
2. Implemented your plans for grades 4-6	0	1	2	3	4	X
3. Implemented your plans for grades 7-12	0	1	2	3	4	X
4. Established procedures for retesting secondary students who failed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
5. Provided opportunities for parents to examine their child's corrected basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
6. Provided opportunities for students to see their corrected basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
7. Reported to the public the number and percent of students who have and have not passed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
8. Reviewed your regular curriculum to determine at which grade levels your basic skills should be taught	0	1	2	3	4	X
9. Conducted training or assistance for appropriate teachers assigned to students who failed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
10. Established procedures to determine how well your basic skills improvement program is working	0	1	2	3	4	X

Section III: QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT

A. SCHOOL DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS

To some extent the implementation of any new effort, such as the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy, is affected by existing characteristics of the school district. In the following questions we ask for your opinion about certain aspects of your district's functioning.

. Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of your district's:
(Circle one response for each item)

	Definitely Inadequate	Less Than Adequate	Adequate	Outstanding	I Don't Know
1. Administrator-To-Teacher Communications; accurate and timely flow of information about your basic skills program from administrators to teachers within your school district	1	2	3	4	X
2. Teacher-To-Administrator Communications; accurate and timely flow of information about your basic skills program from teachers to administrators within your school district	1	2	3	4	X
3. Innovation; history of trying new programs and new methods	1	2	3	4	X
4. Climate; enthusiasm and support for teaching and learning	1	2	3	4	X
5. Adaptability; capacity to adjust to changes, such as declining enrollments, staff and budget reductions, new mandates, etc.	1	2	3	4	X
6. Accountability; responsibility for improving basic skills achievement is appropriately shared among school staff, students, and parents	1	2	3	4	X

B. RESOURCES

To implement the Policy, local school districts must provide their own resources. In the following questions we ask for your opinions about the adequacy of resources allocated to implementing your district's Basic Skills Improvement Program.

. Overall, how would you rate the resources your district is currently allocating to:

(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Needed or Already Done	Definitely Inadequate		Less Than Adequate	Adequate	Outstanding	I Don't Know
1. Curriculum review and development	0	1	2	3	4		X
2. Materials for teaching basic skills	0	1	2	3	4		X
3. Staff training	0	1	2	3	4		X
4. Testing students	0	1	2	3	4		X
5. Follow-up assistance to students who fail the tests	0	1	2	3	4		X
6. Monitoring, evaluating, and modifying your district's basic skills improvement program	0	1	2	3	4		X
7. Providing staff time for implementing your district's Basic Skills Improvement Program	0	1	2	3	4		X

. To what extent have you participated in any Massachusetts Department of Education sponsored:

(Circle one response for each item)

8. Regional Workshops or "Forums"; for example holistic scoring of writing samples, methods for setting standards, discussions of the Policy, etc.

    1. none; because I was unaware of the opportunity
    2. none; I was aware, but I didn't feel the need to
    3. none; I was aware, but could not, or was not designated to go
    4. one workshop
    5. two or more workshops

9. Assistance of Department of Education Staff; on-site, off-site, or telephone advance/information

    1. none; because I was unaware of the opportunity
    2. none; I was aware, but I didn't feel the need to
    3. none; I was aware, but could not, or was not designated
    4. one consultation
    5. two or more consultations

10. Commonwealth Inservice Institute (CII); Institute funded projects in your district on specific aspects of the Policy and its implementation

    1. none; because I was unaware of the opportunity
    2. none; I was aware, but I didn't feel the need to
    3. none; I was aware, but could not, or was not designated to go
    4. one CII project
    5. two or more CII projects

11. Department Publications; reviewing instructional booklets or manuals provided by the Department on setting objectives, establishing standards, etc.

    1. none; because I was unaware of the opportunity
    2. none; I was aware, but I didn't feel the need to
    3. none; I was aware, but could not, or was not designated
    4. one booklet or manual
    5. two or more booklets or manuals

Section IV: QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MASSACHUSETTS BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY

A. FACTS ABOUT THE POLICY

The following questions are to determine how much information about the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy people have been given or have acquired.

Circle T or F for each item, where possible.
Circle X for "I Don't Know" only if you are totally uninformed about particular items.

MASSACHUSETTS BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY WAS ESTABLISHED TO:

	TRUE	FALSE	I DON'T KNOW
1. Comply with a Federal court order which mandates testing in basic skills	T	F	X
2. Increase instructional time in reading, writing, and mathematics	T	F	X
3. Widen public participation in school improvement	T	F	X
4. Establish new or separate instructional programs beyond school districts' regular curriculum	T	F	X
THE POLICY CURRENTLY REQUIRES THAT:			
5. Massachusetts public school students must attain minimal standards in basic skills in order to receive a high school diploma	T	F	X
6. School districts make public their basic skills test results	T	F	X
7. Secondary level students who fail a basic skills test be tested at least once a year until they pass	T	F	X
8. Local school district use the basic skills competency tests developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education	T	F	X

	TRUE	FALSE	I DON'T KNOW
9. Local school districts use a state-specified list of basic skills objectives in secondary reading, writing, and mathematics	T	F	X
10. Special needs (Chapter 766) students may be exempted from basic skills testing	T	F	X
11. Students currently enrolled in approved, transitional, bilingual education programs may be exempted from basic skills testing	T	F	X
12. Local district standards may not be set lower than 65% correct items to pass the tests	T	F	X
13. School districts report the number and percent of students achieving and not achieving minimum standards by race/ethnicity	T	F	X

B. OPINIONS ABOUT THE POLICY

In this section we ask for your opinion about several aspects of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy. Don't worry if you aren't completely certain about "the facts"--we are asking for your opinion or best estimate of the facts.

. Circle the one number which best represents your opinion for each item. Circle X for "No Opinion" only if you are totally uniformed about particular items.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
. IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT, THE POLICY AND ITS REGULATIONS:					
1. Are meeting an important need	1	2	3	4	X
2. Are increasing the emphasis given to basic skills	1	2	3	4	X
3. Are reducing the emphasis given to some other curriculum areas (i.e., music, art, science, etc.)	1	2	3	4	X
4. Are being ignored for the most part	1	2	3	4	X
5. Have had little effect on teachers	1	2	3	4	X
6. Have overemphasized the secondary levels (grade 7-12)	1	2	3	4	X
. THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHOULD REQUIRE:					
7. All school districts to use the same elementary basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
8. All school districts to use the same secondary basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
9. All school districts to use the same standards (score needed to pass the tests)	1	2	3	4	X
10. All school districts to give their basic skills tests at the same grade levels	1	2	3	4	X

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
11. The passing of basic skills tests to be a requirement for high school graduation	1	2	3	4	X
12. The passing of basic skills tests to be a requirement for elementary/ middle school promotion	1	2	3	4	X
. IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT					
13. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in reading at the elementary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
14. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in writing at the elementary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
15. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in mathematics at the elementary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
16. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in reading at the secondary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
17. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in writing at the secondary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
18. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in mathematics at the secondary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
19. Not much is being done to assist students not meeting standards (not passing the tests) in reading	1	2	3	4	X
20. Not much is being done to assist students not meeting standards (not passing the tests) in writing	1	2	3	4	X
21. Not much is being done to assist students not meeting standards (not passing the tests) in mathematics	1	2	3	4	X
22. Teachers are not informed of which students fail the tests until it is too late to develop adequate follow-up services	1	2	3	4	X

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
23. People have made a big issue out of our basic skills test results, by comparing them to the test results of other school districts	1	2	3	4	X
24. The public reporting of test results has had beneficial effects	1	2	3	4	X
25. More time is being spent on basic skills as a result of the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
26. Less time is being spent on art, music, science, history, etc., as a result of the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
27. Student achievement in basic skills will probably improve as a result of the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
. THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHOULD:					
28. Continue the Policy as it is for a few more years	1	2	3	4	X
29. Set state-wide basic skills objectives for all elementary schools	1	2	3	4	X
30. Eliminate the requirements for reporting the number and percent of students achieving and not achieving minimum standards by race/ethnicity	1	2	3	4	X
31. Require that more bilingual students take the basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
32. Require that more special education students take basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
33. Eliminate the Policy immediately as school districts are capable of raising basic skills achievement levels themselves	1	2	3	4	X
34. Drop listening as part of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy	1	2	3	4	X
35. Drop speaking as part of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy	1	2	3	4	X

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
36. Add other basic skills to the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
37. Change the Policy's secondary level objectives in reading, writing, and/or mathematics, as they are too easy or simple	1	2	3	4	X
38. Specify that special education (Chapter 766) students who do not pass a basic skills test once should not have to be tested again.	1	2	3	4	X

WRITTEN COMMENTS: Please feel free to write comments on any aspect of the Policy, or on this questionnaire, on the back of this page.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

MASSACHUSETTS BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY

IMPLEMENTATION STUDY, 1982-83

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR

LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES* OR OTHER LOCAL PARTICIPATION*

PURPOSES: This questionnaire is part of a study of the implementation of the Massachusetts Board of Education's Basic Skills Improvement Policy, effective starting in 1980. The study is designed to determine how local school districts are responding to the Policy's intent and requirements, and to identify factors and conditions which work for and against Policy implementation.

USES: Please answer all questions thoughtfully and frankly. Confidentiality is assured--we do not ask that you put your name on this questionnaire. The names of individuals, schools, or school districts will not be used in any reporting of the results. Your school/school district was chosen randomly from all schools/school districts in Massachusetts.

What is learned from this study about factors and conditions which work for and against implementation of the Policy, will be considered by the Massachusetts Board of Education and Department of Education in their continual assessment of the Policy. This is your opportunity to express your reactions to the Policy.

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*NOTE: Some school districts may use other means of obtaining broad-based participation in their basic skills improvement program. If your district obtains advice from individuals or groups not part of a formal advisory committee, or several subcommittees, please answer the questions which apply to your own participation.

Section I: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following best describe your role(s) affiliation(s) this year? (Circle one or more numbers)

    1. Student in this school district
    2. Parent of school-age child (children) who attends school in this district
    3. Parent of school-age child (children) who does not attend school in this district
    4. Teacher
    5. Administrator or specialist
    6. School Committee member
    7. Employer (business representative)
    8. Representative of general public
    9. Other (please specify) _____

2. Which of the following best describes the form of local participation in which you have been involved regarding your school district's basic skills improvement program? (Circle one number)

    1. Member of a local advisory committee or subcommittee
    2. Consulted as an individual
    3. Consulted with others on a temporary, informal basis
    4. Other (please specify) _____

3. Which of the following best describes how you came to be a member of the (a) Local Advisory Committee (or local participant)? (Circle one number)

    1. I volunteered
    2. I was asked to participate
    3. I was told to participate

4. Which one of the following best describes how long you have been a member of your Local Advisory Committee on basic skills (or local participant)? (Circle one number)

    1. Since before September, 1980, to present
    2. September 1980 to present
    3. January 1981 to present
    4. September 1981 to present
    5. January 1982 to present
    6. Other (please specify) _____

5. Since you became a member (or local participant), how many meetings has your Local Advisory Committee held (or advisory sessions held)? (Circle one number)

    1. No meetings
    2. 1-3 meetings
    3. 4-6 meetings
    4. 7-15 meetings
    5. 16-24 meetings
    6. 25 or more meetings

6. Since you became a member (or local participant), approximately how many meetings of your Local Advisory Committee (or advisory sessions) have your attended? (Circle one number)

   1. None
   2. Less than half
   3. Half
   4. More than half
   5. All

7. Between each meeting of your Local Advisory Committee (or advisory session) that you have attended, how much work related to the committee were you asked to do? (Circle one number)

   1. None
   2. Less than the time spent in the meetings
   3. As much time as spent in the meetings
   4. More time than spent in the meetings

8. Do you have any special responsibilities this year for implementing your district's basic skills improvement program, beyond the classroom? (Circle one number for each of the following)

District-Wide Responsibilities	Building (School) Responsibilities	Curriculum Area Responsibilities
1. Yes	1. Yes	1. Yes
2. No	2. No	2. No

9. Overall, which best describes your level of involvement this year in your school district's basic skills improvement program? (Circle one number)

   1. None at all
   2. Very little
   3. Moderate
   4. High
   5. Extremely high

10. Overall, which best describes your level of knowledge about your school district's basic skills improvement program? (Circle one number)

    1. None at all
    2. Very little
    3. I know enough to know what I'm required to do
    4. Knowledge of many aspects of our school district's programs
    5. Knowledge of most aspects of our school district's programs

11. Overall, which best describes your level of knowledge about the intent and requirements of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy? (Circle one number)

    1. None at all
    2. Very little
    3. Moderate
    4. High
    5. Extremely high

12. Are you aware of any <u>effects</u> (outcomes, consequences) so far in your school district of your basic skills improvement program on:

(Circle one response for each item)

	I'm Not Aware of Any Effects	Definitely Negative Effects	Somewhat Negative Effects	No Effects At All	Somewhat Positive Effects	Definitely Positive Effects
1. The quality of basic skills instruction in reading	X	1	2	3	4	5
2. Your students' achievement of basic skills in reading	X	1	2	3	4	5
3. The quality of basic skills instruction in writing	X	1	2	3	4	5
4. You students' achievement of basic skills in writing	X	1	2	3	4	5
5. The quality of basic skills instruction in mathematics	X	1	2	3	4	5
6. Your students' achievement of basic skills in mathematics	X	1	2	3	4	5

13. Are you aware of any <u>effects</u> (outcomes, consequences) so far in your school district of your basic skills improvement program on the following groups of students? (Circle one response for each item)

1. Vocational/technical/ occupational students	X	1	2	3	4	5
2. Special needs (Chapter 766) students	X	1	2	3	4	5
3. Gifted and talented students	X	1	2	3	4	5
4. Racial/ethnic minority students	X	1	2	3	4	5
5. College preparatory students	X	1	2	3	4	5
6. Bilingual students	X	1	2	3	4	5
7. General education students	X	1	2	3	4	5

Section II: QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL'S BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

A. BASIC SKILLS OBJECTIVES

Basic skills objectives are statements of what students should know or be able to do as a result of effective instruction, such as:

- identify a statement as fact or opinion; or
- change a fraction to a decimal (1/4 to .25).

The Policy requires that every public school district in Massachusetts establish sets of such objectives in reading, writing, and mathematics. It further requires that appropriate curriculum and instruction be provided so that students are likely to acquire those skills by high school graduation.

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school district has done so far concerning its basic skills objectives
(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
1. Made an initial review of your existing curriculum	0	1	2	3	4	X
2. Added basic skills objectives to your existing curriculum	0	1	2	3	4	X
3. Added instructional units to regular classroom curriculum to cover your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
4. Extended existing programs to cover your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
5. Informed teachers of your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
6. Provided staff training to improve instruction in basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X
7. Informed students of your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school district has done so far concerning its basic skills objectives

(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
8. Indentified the grade levels in which your basic skills objectives are to be taught	0	1	2	3	4	X
9. Conducted a review of how your basic skills may be taught in subjects areas other than English and mathematics	0	1	2	3	4	X
10. Provided teachers with names of students in their classes who have not passed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
11. Informed parents of your basic skills objectives	0	1	2	3	4	X

B. BASIC SKILLS STANDARDS

In addition to establishing sets of basic skills objectives, the Policy requires that minimum standards for the achievement of those objectives be set. Minimum standards specify the percent of items which students must answer correctly, or the test score needed, in order to pass the basic skills test (i.e., passing scores).

. Which of the following responses best describe what your school district has done so far concerning its basic skills standards (passing scores)?

(Circle one response for each item)

	Not Started Because Not Needed or Already Done	Not Started But Is Needed	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
1. Informed teachers of the scores needed to pass your tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
2. Informed the local community of the scores needed to pass your tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
3. Reviewed the results of your basic skills tests with your local advisory committee	0	1	2	3	4	X
4. Conducted curriculum reviews based on student test results	0	1	2	3	4	X
5. Reviewed with teachers the items not answered correctly by their students in your basic skills achievement tests	0	1	2	3	4	X
6. Monitored the progress of students who have failed your basic skills tests	0	1	2	3	4	X

Section III: LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OR OTHER LOCAL PARTICIPATION

The Policy requires that local school districts "provide for genuine public participation in the development and periodic review of its basic skills improvement program."

. To what extent has your Local Advisory Committee (or have you) participated in the following areas:

(Circle one response for each item)

	Does Not Apply	Not At All	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	Outstandingly	I Don't Know
1. Review of basic skills objectives (e.g., learnings to be mastered).	0	1	2	3	4	X
2. Review of standards (e.g., pass/fail cutoff levels on tests).	0	1	2	3	4	X
3. Review of follow-up programs and services.	0	1	2	3	4	X
4. Monitoring, evaluating, and/or modifying your basic skills program.	0	1	2	3	4	X
5. Informing the public of test results.	0	1	2	3	4	X
6. Insuring that the Committee will continue to meet and be active.	0	1	2	3	4	X
. How would you describe your Committee's:						
7. Frequency of meetings.	0	1	2	3	4	X
8. Attendance at meetings.	0	1	2	3	4	X
9. Equal opportunity to all members to express their views.	0	1	2	3	4	X
10. Accomplishing your tasks.	0	1	2	3	4	X
11. Having your school district follow your recommendations.	0	1	2	3	4	X
12. Knowledge about the Policy.	0	1	2	3	4	X
13. Knowledge about your school district's basic skills program.	0	1	2	3	4	X
14. Knowledge about the role of your Advisory Committee in your district's basic skills program.	0	1	2	3	4	X
15. Stability of membership.	0	1	2	3	4	X

Section IV: QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MASSACHUSETTS BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY

A. FACTS ABOUT THE POLICY

The following questions are to determine how much information about the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy people have been given or have acquired.

Circle T or F for each item, where possible.
Circle X for "I Don't Know" only if you are totally uninformed about particular items.

MASSACHUSETTS BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY WAS ESTABLISHED TO:

	TRUE	FALSE	I DON'T KNOW
1. Comply with a Federal court order which mandates testing in basic skills	T	F	X
2. Increase instructional time in reading, writing, and mathematics	T	F	X
3. Widen public participation in school improvement	T	F	X
4. Establish new or separate instructional programs beyond school districts' regular curriculum	T	F	X
THE POLICY CURRENTLY REQUIRES THAT:			
5. Massachusetts public school students must attain minimal standards in basic skills in order to receive a high school diploma	T	F	X
6. School districts make public their basic skills test results	T	F	X
7. Secondary level students who fail a basic skills test be tested at least once a year until they pass	T	F	X
8. Local school district use the basic skills competency tests developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education	T	F	X

	TRUE	FALSE	I DON'T KNOW
9. Local school districts use a state-specified list of basic skills objectives in secondary reading, writing, and mathematics	T	F	X
10. Special needs (Chapter 766) students may be exempted from basic skills testing	T	F	X
11. Students currently enrolled in approved, transitional, bilingual education programs may be exempted from basic skills testing	T	F	X
12. Local district standards may not be set lower than 65% correct items to pass the tests	T	F	X
13. School districts report the number and percent of students achieving and not achieving minimum standards by race/ethnicity	T	F	X

B. OPINIONS ABOUT THE POLICY

In this section we ask for your opinion about several aspects of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy. Don't worry if you aren't completely certain about "the facts"--we are asking for your opinion or best estimate of the facts.

. Circle the one number which best represents your opinion for each item. Circle X for "No Opinion" only if you are totally uniformed about particular items.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
. IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT, THE POLICY AND ITS REGULATIONS:					
1. Are meeting an important need	1	2	3	4	X
2. Are increasing the emphasis given to basic skills	1	2	3	4	X
3. Are reducing the emphasis given to some other curriculum areas (i.e., music, art, science, etc.)	1	2	3	4	X
4. Are being ignored for the most part	1	2	3	4	X
5. Have had little effect on teachers	1	2	3	4	X
6. Have overemphasized the secondary levels (grade 7-12)	1	2	3	4	X
. THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHOULD REQUIRE:					
7. All school districts to use the same elementary basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
8. All school districts to use the same secondary basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
9. All school districts to use the same standards (score needed to pass the tests)	1	2	3	4	X
10. All school districts to give their basic skills tests at the same grade levels	1	2	3	4	X

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
11. The passing of basic skills tests to be a requirement for high school graduation	1	2	3	4	X
12. The passing of basic skills tests to be a requirement for elementary/ middle school promotion	1	2	3	4	X
. IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT					
13. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in reading at the elementary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
14. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in writing at the elementary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
15. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in mathematics at the elementary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
16. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in reading at the secondary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
17. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in writing at the secondary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
18. The standard set (score needed to pass the test) in mathematics at the secondary level is too low	1	2	3	4	X
19. Not much is being done to assist students not meeting standards (not passing the tests) in reading	1	2	3	4	X
20. Not much is being done to assist students not meeting standards (not passing the tests) in writing	1	2	3	4	X
21. Not much is being done to assist students not meeting standards (not passing the tests) in mathematics	1	2	3	4	X
22. Teachers are not informed of which students fail the tests until it is too late to develop adequate follow-up services	1	2	3	4	X

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
23. People have made a big issue out of our basic skills test results, by comparing them to the test results of other school districts	1	2	3	4	X
24. The public reporting of test results has had beneficial effects	1	2	3	4	X
25. More time is being spent on basic skills as a result of the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
26. Less time is being spent on art, music, science, history, etc., as a result of the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
27. Student achievement in basic skills will probably improve as a result of the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
. THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHOULD:					
28. Continue the Policy as it is for a few more years	1	2	3	4	X
29. Set state-wide basic skills objectives for all elementary schools	1	2	3	4	X
30. Eliminate the requirements for reporting the number and percent of students achieving and not achieving minimum standards by race/ethnicity	1	2	3	4	X
31. Require that more bilingual students take the basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
32. Require that more special education students take basic skills tests	1	2	3	4	X
33. Eliminate the Policy immediately as school districts are capable of raising basic skills achievement levels themselves	1	2	3	4	X
34. Drop listening as part of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy	1	2	3	4	X
35. Drop speaking as part of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Improvement Policy	1	2	3	4	X

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
36. Add other basic skills to the Policy	1	2	3	4	X
37. Change the Policy's secondary level objectives in reading, writing, and/or mathematics, as they are too easy or simple	1	2	3	4	X
38. Specify that special education (Chapter 766) students who do not pass a basic skills test once should not have to be tested again.	1	2	3	4	X

WRITTEN COMMENTS: Please feel free to write comments on any aspect of the Policy, or on this questionnaire, on the back of this page.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

APPENDIX B

Technical Details of the Questionnaire Development

The initial step in analyzing the data obtained from the pilot questionnaires was to inspect the frequency distributions of the responses to each question. The data from the four versions of the questionnaire were combined for this purpose. Different versions were developed for building administrators and specialists, teachers, district-wide administrators and specialists, and local advisory committee members. Not all of the questions were asked on all questionnaires. For example, questions concerning the management of the basic skills program were asked only of the school building and district-wide administrators. Other sets of questions, however, such as the questions assessing the overall impact of the Policy, were asked of all participants (see Figure 4, p. 18).

The completed questionnaires were given a preliminary check by hand to insure that none of the respondents had left large sections blank or had obviously misinterpreted the instructions. The inspection of the frequency distributions for each question was carried out for two reasons. First, to identify questions where very little variability occurred. That is, were there questions on which there was nearly unanimous agreement? Were there some questions where the distribution of responses might be highly skewed or otherwise strangely distributed? This information is critical in determining how to identify differences across school districts or sub-groups of respondents. It is also helpful in identifying questions that may have been worded in a confusing way or were especially difficult for people to answer.

While no formal statistical criteria were employed at this stage of the analysis, the frequency distributions indicated that there were no major areas of difficulty in completing the questionnaires. For most of the various sets of items or scales that were included, the response rates (proportions of people providing valid answers) were quite consistent across items.

The next step in looking at the pilot data was to examine the correlations among the items that would form the various scales derived from the questionnaire. For example, a set of items elicited opinions concerning the Policy. An examination of the correlations among the items would indicate whether there was general consistency in the way people responded to the different individual items, or whether responses tended to vary widely from item to item. Another important question to be addressed here was whether there were certain key items or pairs of items on any of the proposed scales where there was a substantial amount of missing data.

The first effort here indicated that relatively few people left questions blank. However, many people circled the "Not Needed or Already Done," "I Don't Know," or "No Opinion" responses. For the items used in scales this meant that relatively few people gave scaleable answers to every single item on every one of the scales. It was quite common for a person to circle "I Don't Know" or "No Opinion" to one or two items out of a set of eight or ten questions. The key issue here was whether the people who provided scaleable responses to all questions were representative of all respondents. Thus a comparison was made of the results obtained from those people who provided scaleable responses to all questions on each scale, with the results obtained when the analysis included all respondents who gave scaleable answers to at least two of the items on each scale. The latter approach has the advantage of including as much of the data as possible. The potential drawback of this occurs when there are a large number of individuals who gave scaleable responses to most of the relevant items. The resulting pattern of "missing" data did not indicate any obvious major problems.

Following these preliminary steps in the analysis an evaluation of the items as they were combined into overall scales was carried out. Again, following the procedures described above, two parallel sets of analyses were carried out: one including only the people who gave scaleable responses to all of the questions for each scale; a second including as much of the data as possible. The results of these two were remarkably consistent. Final recommendations on item selection were therefore based on the analyses including as much of the data as possible. The matrices of correlation coefficients using a pairwise-deletion method for handling missing data were used.

There are two main questions addressed in this step in the analysis. First, are there any items on a scale that are clearly inconsistent with the others? That is, are there some questions that do not hang together with the others, and thus should not be included in an overall scale? For example, when local advisory committee members were asked a series of questions concerning the extent to which their committee had participated in a number of areas or activities, there was general consistency or agreement on the amount of participation for all areas except one question, which asked to what extent the committee insured that it would continue to meet and be active. Thus, this question has not strongly related to the other questions (concerning local participation), and was not chosen to be included with the other questions in this overall scale of participation.

The determination of which items did not fit well with others in forming an overall scale involved standard item-analysis procedures. The corrected item-total correlations were computed for every item on every proposed scale. These are simply the correlations between the responses to an individual item and the responses to the total scale (with the item in question deleted). Thus items that are consistent with the others will show high correlations, while items that are inconsistent will show much lower item-total correlations.

A second major question addressed here was the overall reliability of the proposed scales. In the context of this pilot questionnaire, with the emphasis on the construction of effective scales to summarize the opinions, knowledge, and practices concerning Policy implementation, the approach was to examine the internal consistency of the scales. Scales would be considered reliable if the items comprising the scale were answered in a consistent way. That is, if individuals did not vary dramatically in their responses from item to item within a scale, then the scale can be regarded as more reliable or consistent. The most widely used statistic for assessing scale reliability is Cronback's Alpha (see Mehrens, W. A., and Ebel, R. L. (Eds.), Principles of Educational and Psychological Measurement. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967). It is computed

$$\alpha = \frac{K}{(K-1)} \left(1 - \frac{\Sigma S^2}{S_T^2}\right)$$

where S^2 = variance if item 1. S_T^2 = variance if the total score of the K items on the scale.

It is possible to think of alphas as something close to the average correlation among all of the items. Indeed, standardized item alpha, a closely related statistic, is defined as:

$$X = \frac{KF}{1+(K-1)F}$$

where F is the average correlation between items. Scales where the correlations between items are consistently high will produce higher values of alpha. While no clear guidelines are used to define what adequate reliability levels are for various purposes, it is common for researchers involved in scale construction and basic research to use scales with reliability estimates in the .70 range and above. In cases where individual assessment is concerned reliability estimates in the .90's are generally recommended.

In reviewing the items included in the pilot questionnaire, items were flagged for possible deletion if their item-total correlations were low (below .60). If the overall reliability of a scale fell below .85, then special attention was given to the individual items.

The scales initially proposed showed substantial variation in the overall reliabilities. The alpha for the scale on membership and participation on the local advisory board was only .56, for example, with several items showing very low item-total correlations. The scale of items asking about district characteristics, on the other hand, showed an alpha of .91, indicating a very consistent set of responses was obtained across the ten items of this scale.

These statistical procedures formed the basis for identifying some items that could be deleted from the questionnaire and/or its assigned scale, either because they were not consistently answered or because they did not add substantially new information to that obtained through other sources. Final decisions concerning inclusion or exclusion of individual questions, however, should be based on more than just technical grounds concerning scaling and consistency. Thus the final selection of questionnaire items, after considering this data, was made by the Review Committee on the basis of importance and usefulness. The final item-to-scale assignments are shown in Figure 7 (p. 107), along with the (estimated) alpha reliability values of those scales.

Figure 7: Questionnaire Scales

SCALES	Pilot Test Cases (N)	Alpha Reliability Values*	ITEM/QUESTIONNAIRE LOCATIONS (page and item numbers)			
			Teachers	Building (School) Administrators/ Specialists	District-Wide Administrators/ Specialists	Local Advisory Committee
1. OVERALL IMPACT	154	.87	p. 4, # 10/1-7	p. 2, # 7/1-7	p. 2, # 7/1-7	p. 3 # 13/1-7
2. OBJECTIVES	154	.916	p. 5, # 1, 5-7; p. 6, # 8-11	p. 3, # 1; 5-7; p. 4, # 8-11	p. 3, # 1, 507; p. 4, # 8-11	p. 4, # 1, 5-7; p. 5, # 8-11
3. STANDARDS	154	.889	p. 7, # 1-6	p. 5, # 1-6	p. 5, # 1-6	p. 6, # 1-6
4. INSTRUMENTS	105	.833	p. 9, # 1-7			
5. FOLLOW-UP	130	.901	p. 8, # 1, 5-6; 8-9	p. 7, # 1, 5-6; 8-9		
6. MANAGEMENT	35	.880		p. 6, # 1-4, 7	p. 6, # 1-4, 7	
7. RESOURCES	144	.941	p. 11, # 1-7	p. 9, # 1-7	p. 8, # 1-7	
8. PARTICIPATION	14	.843				p. 7, # 1-5
9. ADVISORY	15	.852				p. 7, # 8-15
10. DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS	144	.912	p. 10, # 1-6	p. 8, # 1-6	p. 7, # 1-6	
11. POLICY OPINIONS	154	.801	p. 15, # 4-5; p. 16, # 13-22 p. 17, # 23, 26	p. 13, # 4-5; p. 14, # 13-22; p. 15, # 23, 26	p. 12, # 4-5; p. 13, # 13-22; p. 14, # 23, 26	p. 10, # 4-5; p. 11, # 13-22 p. 12, # 23, 26

*Values prior to eliminating one or more items which in each case raised these values slightly.

APPENDIX C

Student, Teacher, and Parent Interview Instruments

MDE Basic Skills
Pilot, 3/16/82
(revised)

STUDENT INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION: Hello, I'm ___. I'm talking with a number of students like yourself about the tests they took for basic skills. I'd like to ask you some questions. I want to assure you that whatever you say will be confidential. Is this O.K. with you?

A. All Students

. Here is a test which was given in this school (when). Please look over it while I ask you some questions.

_____ student's name
___ male ___ female
___ grade level now
___ grade levels in (town or city) schools

1. Do you remember ever taking this test?

___ yes
___ immediate answer
___ answer after prompting
___ no (IF NO, probe)
___ doesn't remember

Go to item 5

. IF YES

2. Did you find it easy or hard?

___ easy . PROBE: . why? explain?
___ hard
___ some parts easy, some parts hard
___ no opinion

3. How seriously did most students treat the test?

___ very seriously . PROBE: . why?
___ not too seriously . normal or disruptive events?
___ not at all seriously
___ no opinion

4. How about you, did you take it seriously?

___ very seriously . PROBE: . why?
___ not too seriously
___ not at all seriously
___ no opinion

5. How do you usually do on tests?

___ very well
___ okay
___ some good, some bad
___ poorly
___ no opinion

. PROBE:
. why?
. what happens to you?
. feelings?

6. Do you feel that the (town or city) schools prepared you well for this test?

___ yes
___ no
___ no opinion

. PROBE:
. why?
. explain?
. test coaching?

7. Do you know how well you did on this test?

___ yes
___ no
___ not sure

. PROBE:
. passed/failed? above/below standard?
. how informed? by whom?
. when?
. effects/reactions?

8. Do your parent know how well you did on this test?

___ yes
___ no
___ not sure

. PROBE:
. how informed? by whom?
. when?
. effects/reactions?

9. Did you ever see your corrected test? Do you know which questions you got right or wrong?

___ yes
___ no
___ not sure

. PROBE:
. in what form?
. who initiated?
. who was involved? how?
. effects/reactions?

10. Has anyone here ever discussed your test results with you?

___ yes
___ no
___ not sure

. PROBE:
. who?
___ teacher(s)
___ parent(s)
___ guidance staff
___ administrator(s)
___ close friends
___ other students
___ others _____
_____

. who initiated? why?
. effects/reactions?

11. Do you know why the school gave you this test?

___ yes . PROBE: . why? explain?
___ no
___ not sure

. For students who passed the test ---

12a. All in all do you think that this testing is a good idea?

___ yes . PROBE: . why? explain?
___ no
___ no opinion

13a. Before we finish, is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your experience with this/these tests?

___ yes RECORD: _____
___ no _____

14a. Do you have any questions for me?

RECORD: _____
_____

END/THANKS

. For students who failed the test ---

12b. Why do you think you got the score you did on this test?

RECORD: _____
_____

13b. Did you ever receive special help in learning the things you got wrong?

___ yes . PROBE: . what?
___ no . when? how long?
___ not sure . by whom?
. effects/reactions?

14b. What do you think your chances are of getting a higher score next time the test is given?

___ good . PROBE: . why? explain?
___ poor
___ not sure

15b. All in all do you think that this testing is a good idea?

___ yes . PROBE: . why? explain?

___ no

___ no opinion

16b. Before we finish, is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your experience with this/these tests?

___ yes RECORD: _____

___ no _____

17b. Do you have any questions for me?

RECORD: _____

_____

END/THANKS

MDE Basic Skills
Pilot, 3/16/82
(revised)

TEACHER INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION: Hello, I'm ___ and I'm here today as part of a state-wide study of schools' basic skills programs. I'd like to ask you some questions about (town or city) 's basic skills program. Your comments will be confidential. Is this O.K. with you?

. Here's a test which was given in this school (when) . Please look it over while I ask you some questions.

_____	teacher's name
_____	student's name
___ male	___ female
___	grade levels now teaching
___	subject(s) now teaching
_____	
_____	
___	years in this district

1. Are you aware of whether this test was ever given to your students?

___ yes . PROBE: . when?
___ no
___ not sure

2. Are you familiar with the test?

___ yes, thoroughly . IF YES, PROBE: . how? . when? . development? . revision? . administration?
___ yes, casually
___ no (IF NO, go to item [5])

IF YES (thoroughly or casually, ask items 3 and 4)

3. Do you know how the test results are used in this district?

___ yes . IF YES, PROBE: . how? . by whom?
___ no
___ don't know

4. Do you think this test is a good measure of students' basic (reading, writing, and math) skills?

___ yes
___ no
___ somewhat
___ no opinion

. PROBE:
. why?
. explain?
. level of difficulty?

---

5. Did you ever get any information about your students' test results?

___ yes
___ no [IF NO, probe ... then to [11]]
___ not sure

. PROBE:
. in what form?
. who initiated?
. who was involved? how?
. effects/reactions?

6. Do you feel that the (town or city) schools prepare its students well for this test?

___ yes
___ no
___ somewhat
___ no opinion

. PROBE:
. why?
. explain?
. test coaching?

. I have talked with (or will be talking with) (student's name) about similar things. He/she is a student of yours, right?

___ yes
___ no (IF NO, explain and go to item [11]) _____ _____

7. Have you ever discussed (student's name) 's test results with anyone?

___ yes
___ no
___ not sure

. PROBE:
. who? ___ student(s) ___ parent(s) ___ guidance staff ___ administrator(s) ___ other teachers ___ others _____ _____
. who initiated? why?
. effects/reactions?

8. Do you know how (student's name) did on the test?

___ yes
___ no
___ don't remember

. PROBE:
. why?
. how were you informed?
. when?

9. Do you know which items he/she did and did not know?

___ yes
___ no

. PROBE:
. explain?

Have you ever given him/her any help in the skills or concepts covered by the exam?

___ yes
___ no

. PROBE:
. in what way?
. when?
. effect/reaction?

10. Have you ever received any direction in ways to assist students who fail the test?

___ yes
___ no

. PROBE:
. who?
. what?
. when?
. how?
. effects/reactions?

11. Do you provide any instruction in your classes concerning skills covered in the test?

___ yes
___ no
___ not sure

. PROBE:
. what?
. how long?
. source?
. why? explain?
. effects/reactions?

12. Have you made any changes in your instruction as a result of these tests? Do you teach any differently?

___ yes
___ no
___ don't know

. PROBE:
. what changes?
. why?
. who initiated?
. effectiveness?

14. How much do you know about (town or city) 's basic skills program?

___ a great deal
___ some
___ very little
___ nothing

. PROBE:
. what?
. how did you learn?

15. Did you play any role in the development or implementation of this district's program?

___ yes
___ no
___ sort of

. PROBE:
. what?
. when?
. how?
. with whom?

16. Overall, do you think (town or city) 's basic skills program is worth the time, money, and effort?

___ yes
___ no
___ somewhat
___ not sure

. PROBE:
. why?
. how?
. explain?

17. Before we finish, is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your basic skills experience in (district) ?

___ yes
___ no

. RECORD: _____

_____

18. Do you have any questions for me? RECORD: _____

_____

END/THANKS

MDE Basic Skills
Pilot, 3/15/82
(revised)

PARENT INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION: Hello, I'm ___ and I'm doing a study of basic skills programs across the state for the Massachusetts Department of Education. I've talked with your son/daughter _____ and some of his/her teachers at (school name) school. I'd like to ask you some questions about (district name) 's basic skills program. Be assured that your comments will be confidential. Is this O.K. with you, or is there someone else in the house I should talk with.

. First, let me explain the program briefly to see if you remember hearing anything about it. Basic skills are things all students should know, like simple reading, writing, and math. Each year some students are tested in basic skills. Students who fail the tests are to be given special help until they pass when retested. The goal is to help students master basic skills before they leave school.

ASK: Parent ( ) or Guardian ( )

___ Male
___ Female

1. Have you ever heard anything about (town or city) 's basic skills program?

___ yes
___ no
___ not sure

. PROBE:
. what?
. source(s)?
. effects/reactions?

___ immediate answer
___ answer after prompting

2. Do you know whether (student's name) was ever tested in basic skills by the (town or city) schools?

___ yes, definitely basic skills test(s)
___ tested yes, but not sure if basic skills test(s)
___ don't know

IF YES, PROBE:
. why?
. when tested?
. source(s) of information?
. effects/reactions?

___ immediate answer
___ answer after prompting

. If NO or DON'T KNOW to Items #1 and #2, end the interview here.

IF YES to Items #1 and #2, continue

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me before we finish?

___ yes RECORD: _____

___ no _____

END/THANKS

3. Overall, do you think that having such a basic skills program in (town or city) is a good idea?

___ yes
___ no
___ no opinion

. PROBE: . why? explain?

4. Do you know how well (student's name) did on the test(s)?

___ yes
___ no
___ not sure

. PROBE:
. passed/failed?
. how informed?
. when?
. effects/reactions?

. IF NO to Item #4, end the interview here.

IF YES or NOT SURE to Item #4, continue

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me before we finish?

___ yes RECORD: _____

___ no _____

END/THANKS

5. Did you ever see (student's name) 's corrected test(s), or which answers (he/she) got right or wrong?

___ yes
___ no
___ not sure

. PROBE:
. who initiated?
. who was involved? how?
. effects/reactions?

6. Did anyone ever discuss (student's name) 's test results with you?

___ yes
___ no
___ not sure

. PROBE:
. who? ___ the student
___ other parent/guardian
___ teacher(s)
___ guidance staff
___ administrator(s)
___ others _____
_____
. who initiated?
. effects/reactions?

7. Do you know if (student's name) ever received any special help in learning the things (he/she) got wrong?

___ yes
___ no
___ not sure
___ don't know

. PROBE:
. what?
. when?
. by whom?
. effects/reactions?

8. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about before we finish?

___ yes
___ no

RECORD: _____
_____

9. Are there any questions you have for me?

___ yes
___ no

RECORD: _____
_____

END/THANKS